India

FOR THE

No. 63. New Series. No. 157. Old Series.

WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1899.

Registered as a Newspaper. Price...... 2d. By Post, 2½d.

Notes and News 129
India in the House of Commons ... 132
The Great Indian Epics 133
Our London Letter 133
Chronicle of the Week 134
"India in the House of Commons": Address by Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P.; Speeches by Sir C. Dilke, M.P., and others 135
The Bounty-Fed Sugar Bill: Indian Opinion 139
Some Opinions of the Press ... 139
Mr. Romesh Dutt's "Maha-Bharata" 140
Indian Affairs in Parliament: Special Report 141
Public Meetings on Indian Questions: The Work of the British Committee... 142
Advertisements 143-144

NOTES AND NEWS.

THE Bill which Sir James Westland introduced in the Legislative Council at Calcutta on Friday last invites discrimination. It is a Bill to impose a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar imported into India, and the purpose of the duty is not to raise revenue but to protect "the Indian producer." In other words the Bill is frankly protective. As such it challenges the opposition of those who, like ourselves, are free traders on principle. But the question is whether the *bona fide* demand for such legislation among the Indian people is so strong as to make those of us who attach importance to the Indian claim for fiscal independence regard our hostility to protective legislation as a thing of secondary concern. That is, ought we to say to the Indian people in this matter, "We think you are quite wrong, that you are mistaken as to your real interests, but if you are strongly set upon this sort of legislation we will not oppose you, because we could not in similar circumstances oppose a self-governing colony"? We must confess that we are not yet satisfied that there exists a *bona fide* popular demand of this kind. Certainly the canting formula which Lord George Hamilton thinks good enough for the House of Commons does not help anybody. To talk about the independence of the local Legislature is merely a deliberate attempt to throw dust in people's eyes, and Lord George Hamilton was promptly, severely, and deservedly rebuked by Mr. Maclean's scathing reference to the incident of the cotton duties. The Sugar Duty Bill is a Government Bill, admittedly approved in advance by the Secretary of State, and introduced in a Council in which there is a permanent official majority. Nonsense about the independence of the local Legislature may therefore be safely ignored, the truth being that, in dealing with a Government Bill, the local Legislature is to all intents and purposes an additional wing of the India Office.

We must look elsewhere for evidence that the Bill is desired by Indian opinion. Reuter's telegram says that Sir James Westland, in introducing the Bill, "adduced the strongest proofs that the importation of the bounty-fed article was seriously affecting the Indian producer and had already led to the closing of numerous refineries." Who is meant by "the Indian producer"? Does the phrase mean "the producer in India," whether European or Indian, or does it mean producers who are actually Indians? Much depends on the answer to that question. At first sight, undoubtedly, the introduction of a Government Bill raises a presumption that it is Anglo-Indian and not Indian interests that are being consulted. English officials have never shown any tenderness for Indian industries, but quite the reverse. Witness, for example, this passage from the "History of British India" by Mill and Wilson:—

> It was stated in evidence (1813) that the cotton and silk goods of India up to the period could be sold for a profit in the British market at a price from 50 to 60 per cent. lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent. on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture. Had India been independent, she would have retaliated, would have imposed preventive duties upon British goods and would thus have preserved her own productive industry from annihilation. This act of self-defence was not permitted her; she was at the mercy of the stranger. British goods were forced upon her without paying any duty, and the foreign manufacturer employed the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended upon equal terms.

That has been English policy in relation to native Indian industries, and it may well be that the rankling recollection of it tends to induce Indians to join in a kick against England's present fiscal policy by way of retaliation.

There seems to be a clear suggestion of the existence of this kind of feeling in the telegram which we print to-day from our Madras correspondent. "Educated Native opinion here," he telegraphed on Wednesday, "welcomes the Sugar Bounty Bill as recognising its contention against unqualified 'Free Trade' principles as applied to India, and its demand for protection of Indian industries against powerful foreign competition." It appears to be a natural inference from these words that the leaders of Indian opinion in the Madras Presidency regard the Bill not so much as an individual measure of relief from which the masses of the Indian people stand to gain manifest benefits, as a fitting occasion for a protest against a course of general policy which has left bitter feelings behind. If this interpretation be accurate, one can very well appreciate the causes of Indian resentment without assenting to the view that it is wisely and profitably shown in giving support to the present Bill. As for the merits of the Bill itself, one can only say that the information which is at present available, far from proving the utility of it, indicates the reverse. It seems indeed to have been commended by the Chambers of Commerce in Bengal and Madras, but one is accustomed to think that Chambers of Commerce in India represent rather the wishes of money-making aliens than the policy of the Indian community. Nor are the Chambers unanimous, for the Bombay Chamber is reported to have contended that imports of sugar into India supply the deficiences of local production, and that there is no satisfactory evidence to show that the area of land under sugar cultivation has during recent years contracted.

It will take a great deal of evidence to prove that the effect of the Bill, if it becomes law, will not be to benefit the few at the expense of the many. Precisely to the extent to which bounty-fed sugar is imported into India from Germany and Austria, the taxpayers of Germany and Austria are now laid under contribution by the consumers in India. This is an arrangement to which Germany and Austria may well object, but Indian consumers, unless they are desperately altruistic, should welcome it. To discover the origin of the Bill one must ask who will profit by it, and one would not be greatly surprised to find that the persons officially described as Indian producers are in the main Anglo-Indian capitalists. Their interests would no doubt be served for a time by a countervailing duty, and the inclination both of the Government of India and of the Cabinet at home might conceivably coincide with theirs. For while the spendthrift Government of India is greatly concerned about its land revenue ("sugar cultivation in many large districts is," said the writer of "Indian Affairs" in the *Times* of March 9, "the basis of the land and canal revenue"), the Cabinet at home, or the most "pushful" section of it, is reasonably suspected of leanings towards protective legislation. This aspect of the matter is indicated with more candour than prudence in the "blocking" resolution of which Sir Howard Vincent has given notice. He congratulates the Government of India upon the Bill and asks the House of Commons to "express the hope that her Majesty's Government will in the near future decide upon similar grounds to initiate like legisla-

tion in this House, having regard to the injury caused to the sugar industries and their allied trades in Great Britain by the operation of the bounties, and the pecuniary burdens imposed upon the taxpayers of the United Kingdom by the consequent depressed, distressed, and discontented condition of the West Indian Colonies." Is not that what the Germans call emptying out the baby with the bath?

The British Indian Association has in the past been more noted for loyalty and conservatism than for devotion to self-government and progress. The announcement therefore that it supported the principle of the Calcutta Municipal Bill evoked regret rather than surprise. But this renders its determination henceforth to oppose the Bill all the more important; and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* is justified in congratulating the opponents of the measure on so valuable an adhesion. The *Hindoo Patriot*, the organ of the Association, explains that when that body accepted the principle of the Bill, they understood thereby "that all the principal interests were to be represented in proportion to their importance"; and of this importance, and therefore of due representation, they considered taxation the only possible and reasonable test. Now the Native community contribute about two-thirds of the total revenue, and are entitled to twice as many representatives at least as the European residents. Thus the Bill flagrantly violates the principle which the British Indian Association affirmed. As the Select Committee have made no substantial modifications, the Association intends to follow a different course in the future and actively oppose the Bill.

Dr. Fairbairn, in spite of his high powers, his liberal spirit and his moderation, does not appear, if we may believe the *Mahratta*, to have left the people of Poona more favourably impressed with Christianity than they were before. It is said that on the occasion of his second lecture the audience laughed good-naturedly when he tried to distinguish between the Christian miracles and all others. Great exception is naturally taken to Dr. Fairbairn's assertions that the religion of the Vedas is a dead religion and was never a moral one. Our contemporary insists that the Hindu religion of to-day is at least as near the Vedic as modern is near primitive Christianity; and it fails to find anything to "justify the pretensions with which the globe-trotting missionary flits from continent to continent crying death to all religions except his own, apparently oblivious of the fact that religious enslavement is not as easy as political conquest." The *Mahratta* recommends Dr. Fairbairn to turn his attention nearer home. "Charity begins at home, and all enthusiastic missionaries should undertake the work of *Christianising* those that are Christians already before aspiring to bring the whole world within the fold of Christ." In any case the Christianity of Imperialism is hardly likely to recommend itself to the people of India.

The Rev. Dennis Osborne lately delivered before the Y.M.C.A. in Bombay a lecture on the Indian Mutiny, which the *Champion* characterises as "mischievous." Besides being generally calculated by its tone to reopen old wounds which are now healing, the lecture contained a specific assertion that the Mutiny "was joined in by the common people everywhere with greed and avidity." Now we know from the testimony of those who held official positions during that troubled time that the multitude were indifferent. There is in fact a consensus of opinion that the Mutiny was a military revolt; nay, more, that even this military revolt was only partial, the majority of the troops remaining true to their salt. Our contemporary, on the supposition that he "came out to India to preach Christianity and not to stir up bad feeling," advises the Rev. Dennis Osborne "to stick to his pulpit and to keep off the lecturer's platform."

Lord George Hamilton told his Chiswick constituents on January 25 that he was hostile only to proposals directly or indirectly tending to weaken or subvert British rule in India, and was earnestly desirous of advancing in every possible way the moral, intellectual, and material condition of India's numerous nationalities. The declaration is one that all friends of India would cordially agree with. But the proof of the pudding is still in the eating of it. We commented on the speech at the time. It is now instructive to note the unanimity of condemnation which the speech has excited from the Indian Press, while not a single Anglo-Indian paper has a word to say for Lord George. It is an ominous silence. Even the conciliatory *Indian Spectator* asks: "What is the use of condemning wholesale, without trying to understand what it is the other side say?" What, indeed? But if Lord George only understood the position of the other side his occupation would be gone. He would then be transformed into quite another man, and Indian affairs would be conducted on a basis of fact and reason.

The *Champion* says that "the speech as reported"—it apparently has difficulty in believing that even Lord George Hamilton could have uttered such statements—"shows how precious little the Secretary of State for India knows about India, or about the sentiments of its people, whose destinies have by an inscrutable Providence been placed in his hands for the last three years." "Never since the office of Secretary of State was instituted," it remarks, "have Indians been cursed with a functionary at Westminster of the ignorance and conceit combined in Lord George Hamilton." As to his profession of no hostility to Indian aspirations:—

Poor innocent man, he seems unconscious of the history of his own acts during the last three years that he has been at the India Office. A reference to that history might have easily informed him whether he has or has not opposed all reforms tending to the elevation of Indians. It might have also told him, had he cared to rely upon his own independent judgment of the opinions expressed about him by the leading organs of Indian public opinion, why Indians *were* hostile to him. But he has never cared to do the one or the other. No. For reasons best known to himself, he avoided all reference to facts and past history. He relied upon his own imagination.

As to his references to the Congress the *Champion* challenges him to produce a single scrap of evidence to justify them. If he cannot—and of course he cannot—then our contemporary justly declares

that a functionary who indulges in fiction against India and the Indians, who by his words and deeds irritates the vast population of the country, loyal to the core, and is thus instrumental in engendering dissatisfaction among her Majesty's Indian subjects, is unworthy to hold an exalted post, and the sooner such a personage is removed the better for the peace and quiet of the country.

Let us pass from Bombay to Calcutta. There the *Bengalee* denies Lord George Hamilton's allegations of belittlement of the work of recent Viceroys, and comments pointedly on his criticism of the Congress-wallahs.

If it is their fault to ask for British institutions in India they are doing exactly what had been anticipated of them more than half-a-century ago by so great an authority as Macaulay, and what he had looked forward to almost with prophetic inspiration. . . . That which Macaulay regarded as "the proudest day in the annals of England" is looked upon as a serious embarrassment by the puny administrators who mimic the ways of the great masters the latchet of whose shoes they are unworthy to unloose. It is a bitter irony of fate that we, the representatives of an Eastern civilisation, should have to appeal to Englishmen to enforce the principles of English administration in the government of the Indian Empire. . . . It is to be borne in mind that only a modicum of representative institutions that the Congress prays for.

Another Calcutta paper, the *Indian Mirror*, referring to the change of Viceroy, exclaims: "How much happier would India be were a change brought about the occupancy of the office of the Secretary of State!" Lord George Hamilton had spoken of his long incumbency at the India Office; whereupon our contemporary asks a question and answers it:—

Has he during that portentously long period given a single proof of his "earnest desire" to advance in every way the moral, the intellectual and the material condition of India? In this very speech he has given his reasons for not encouraging Indian aspirations.

The *Indian Mirror* indeed expressly endorses our own criticism.

Now for Madras. The *Madras Standard* deals more directly with the *Times* than with the Secretary of State, but the Secretary of State is by no means neglected. Thus:—

His discussion was confined to abuse of the educated natives of India who speak on behalf of their countrymen and their representatives in England. Obviously he assumed that natives of India knew nothing of their country, its people, and the ways of its government. Much less did they that represented their views in Parliament. . . . . It did not suggest itself to his lordship whether he, who has never seen India and who picked up scraps of information about it from official reports, possessed more knowledge of the country than those who live, move and have their being in the country, and who, born of the people and trusted by the people, having real stake in the country, are by ties of blood and kinship inseparably attached to it.

. . . . What an honest journal ought to do, under such circumstances, is to warn him against this ridiculous style of criticism.

But the *Times* of course "quietly follows the lead of Lord George Hamilton" instead of dealing faithfully with his follies.

Sir Henry Fowler, addressing his constituents at Wednesfield on Tuesday evening, unbosomed himself on the duties of a political party and a political leader. "A political party and a political leader," he said, somewhat obviously, "could never please all parties." Referring to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, he proceeded to say:—

The business of the leader of the Liberal party is not to please the Tory party, but to please the party of which he is leader; and the moment Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took his own line and propounded his own views, which happened to be particularly objectionable to those of the opposite party, they suddenly professed to discover that he is not the strong man they thought he was.

It might have done Sir Henry Fowler good to hear what some not uninfluential men of his own party were saying about himself as a political leader at the very time he was speaking. He may have himself recalled how he succeeded in pleasing the Tory party and disconcerting his own party in not a few Indian discussions in the House. He cannot but be aware that Lord George Hamilton has publicly acknowledged the special value of his support and his confidence that he may depend upon it. The political leader whose decision sanctioned the Waziri campaign certainly pleased the Tory party, though Sir Henry Fowler now seems to censure him for not knowing "his business." Sir Henry now seems to endorse the opinion that he, as "a political leader," is not "a strong man." The world does move after all.

Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich, who is well known in connexion with surveys on the North-Western frontier, expatiated on Monday evening to the Royal Geographical Society on "The Use of Practical Geography." In an academic sense, no doubt, the lecture was a valuable one. But Sir Thomas had practical ends in view, and he illustrated from his own experience the troubles that arise from loose description in international treaties and agreements about boundaries. This in fact he signalised as "the most prolific of all the sources of international irritation"; and England he thought has suffered most on this score, for our statesmen "do not fully appreciate the absolutely immeasurable cost of geographical ignorance." Far be it from us to dispute the argument. But there is more behind. Our statesmen do not recognise their boundaries even in the rough. Where is this same North-Western boundary? It is officially laid down, in general terms at least, sufficient to indicate certain regions as clearly beyond it on any possible interpretation. Yet our rulers send troops into such regions and say they are "on," or are operating "on," the frontier, and they are very snappish if anybody says they are "beyond" the frontier. It is not geography they lack. It is a sense of the ethical distinction between mine and thine, which no geographical accomplishments are likely to supply.

The *Champion* publishes as a supplement the full text of the Khot's petition against the Bill now before the Bombay Legislative Council. As our readers know, the Khot is the holder of a village in certain districts of Bombay who collects and pays the assessment and receives for his trouble either a share of the produce or a fixed sum of money. There have been three enquiries by Committees into the position of the Khots. On the first two an independent member sat, and both a majority and minority report were presented. The third was composed exclusively of officials. But so far none of the reports have been made public. Nevertheless the Bombay Government think it right to proceed with legislation. The Bill aims at replacing the crop-sharing system, which the revenue officials seem to have found troublesome, by a fixed revenue. Now it is very doubtful whether an elastic rent varying with the yield of the land is not better than a rigid and unvarying rule; but leaving this general consideration out of account, the Khots complain of the abrogation of the Act of 1880 without their consent, that Act having been in the nature of a compromise. For the charges of oppression brought against them no evidence is forthcoming; nay, more, in the case of the Devgad Khots, whose income was already fixed and sometimes unequal to paying the assessment, the Government, when a Khot has been thus forced to surrender his village, has not scrupled to exact the enhanced assessment from the cultivator which they would not let the Khot exact. If then there has been oppression the Government has been worse than the Khot.

We are glad to see that active steps have been taken to establish a memorial of the late Mahárájá of Darbhanga. An influential meeting was held on February 11 at the Dalhousie Institute in Calcutta, Sir John Woodburn presiding. Sir John introduced the subject in handsome terms:—

There was a time when the Mahárájá and myself had worked together, and that was enough to make me acquainted with his great capacity. The Mahárájá possessed all those qualities which make men valued to those who sought for his advice—those sterling qualities, the straightforwardness of the mind which are valued in every country. He gained my perfect confidence and respect, and his death was to me a loss of a counsellor and a friend whose soundness of counsel and sincerity of purpose I equally value. Perhaps I have said more of his qualities than of his charity. The munificence of his charity and the generous administration of his property were very well known.

The subsequent speakers also did willing and ample honour to the qualities of the lamented Mahárájá.

Dr. Blaney, who has been giving evidence before the Plague Commission at Bombay, is strongly of opinion that the stringent measures enforced by the Bombay Government, even if they were justifiable in the period of initial rise and slow spreading, were both useless and unjustifiable during the periods of highest intensity, natural decline and quiescence. Moreover, he considers the results insignificant and disappointing in comparison with the heavy cost. More would have been accomplished if the money had been spent on permanent sanitary reforms which would have checked all diseases rather than on uncertain repressive measures against one; for in his view plague is far from being the most deadly of preventible diseases. Thus he calculates that while a Plague visitation may arrive once in a century and last for seven years, slaying 700,000, cholera and fever during the same hundred years will slay 35,000,000. Dr. Blaney gives instances of the objectionable manner in which plague measures were enforced. Thus eleven persons were removed to a hospital in the same closed ambulance, two of whom were found to be alive and nine dead. He does not think that infection is carried from one place to another by rats. There was a higher mortality in non-rat than in rat districts, and the ships in the docks were not infected, though rats were visiting them freely. The rats seem to have stayed and died in their homes. The *Mahratta* describes Dr. Blaney's evidence as "bold, perspicacious, and cogently argumentative."

There has been more than enough misunderstanding in connexion with recent events at Poona. It is a pity that the *Bombay Gazette* should have increased the confusion by publishing a reproduction of an article in the *Kesari*, which the *Mahratta* calls "a piece of the most gross and malicious mistranslation." The *Mahratta* places "the spurious version" and "the correct version" side by side and points out the significance of the variations. The materiality of these is now the less, as the *Bombay Gazette* published a correction, though only in the form of a letter and without any expression of regret for the blunder. The unfortunate thing is that a correction may run after the original blunder all the week and never catch it up. With an increasing tendency to a fair handling of the Poona affairs, our Bombay contemporary will probably be more careful for the future.

The *Tribune*, like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, supports Mr. Cotton against the Indian Government in his proposal to establish the zemindari system rather than the rayatwari in the colonies which there is some talk of forming in Assam. Our contemporary thinks the extension of cultivation in Madras and elsewhere is due more to the pressure of population than to the merits of the rayatwari system; and in Assam "there is no healthy increase of population." Thus we have the increase of population spoken of as the fundamental cause of Indian misery by one set of persons, and as the healthy stimulus of material progress by another. This at least shows that there is not that consensus of belief in the "over-population" theory which its advocates would fain persuade us prevails in India.

INDIA IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

No one is so well qualified to speak on the difficulty of bringing Indian questions before the House of Commons as Sir William Wedderburn, who has endeavoured so long and devotedly to rouse that body to a sense of its duties to India. Thus the address which he gave last Tuesday before the Liberal Forwards and their friends, a report of which appears on another page, had a special importance both from his great knowledge of the wants and wishes of India, and from his experience of the indifference with which the House of Commons regards all questions connected with our great dependency. There are, indeed, many obstacles in the way of those who wish to interest the House in Indian affairs. The ignorance fostered by the bureaucracy, and the sacrosanct character which the defenders of that body claim for it, stand in the way. So, too, does the difficulty of raising Indian questions in the House; for neither the salary of the Secretary of State, nor the expenses of his department come into the estimates, as both appear in the Indian Accounts alone. Finally, there is the consideration that the Indians have no votes. The potent fear of the electors makes the heads of other departments ready to enquire into all grievances, even complaints against officials; but in India grievances are disregarded, and the denial of a self-righteous official is sufficient to check all investigation.

And yet there are very strong reasons why Parliament should assume a more active interest in the affairs of India. So far as the people of the country are concerned our Government is a despotism, a benevolent and enlightened despotism, as we are assured and as we may hope, but still a despotism. And the despot, the man who has the deciding word which may set the machinery of legislation and administration in motion, is the Secretary of State for India, nominally responsible to the House of Commons, but really, owing to the difficulty of bringing Indian affairs effectually before the House, irresponsible and influenced chiefly by the antiquated bureaucrats who form his council. Now it is even more essential in a despotism than in any other form of government that the rulers should be accessible to every breath of public opinion and should train themselves to discover the wishes and feelings of their subjects; nor is it less necessary in order to give the people an opportunity of weighing the acts of those who bear rule, that the despot and his agents should not be among those who love darkness and dread the light. It was said of the great Akbar that he sat with four doors open. We have raised Lord George Hamilton to the place of Akbar, but we have not been able to endow him with the virtues of that great Prince.

If then it is before all things necessary that the Government of British India, despotic as it is in its nature, should be ready to take into consideration the wishes of the Indians as well as those of its own officials, is it not desirable that the very small means that the Indians possess of impressing their views on the authorities should be reinforced by making the control of the House of Commons a reality and not a sham? It is indeed a favourite argument of Anglo-Indians that members of Parliament are so ignorant of Indian affairs that their interference is certain to be productive of evil. Apparently Indian officials consider this ignorance as invincible, for they certainly do little to enlighten it. But if it is really the ignorance of Parliament men that is their chief fault, the officials might be expected to see with unfeigned pleasure the lead in Indian matters taken by Sir William Wedderburn, whose knowledge and experience are beyond dispute. Yet, strange as it may seem, Sir William has been especially singled out for abuse by Lord George Hamilton. Can it be that this charge of ignorance is but a feint, and that among the officials knowledge and experience are considered the most dangerous of faults in a member of Parliament who turns his attention to the affairs of India?

It must not be forgotten that, however much the officials may rage, past interferences of Parliament have not been so fatuous or ineffective as they would fain have us believe. Mr. Schwann, who took the chair on Tuesday night, mentioned two cases in which it was apparently very effective. The first case was that of the attack on trial by jury in Bengal, an attack which was frustrated by the debate in the Commons and which has not been since renewed. The second was the deposition of the Mahárájá of Kashmir, whose character was so vehemently defended in the House by Mr. Bradlaugh. The Government professed to consider him too wicked to be any longer allowed to reign; but two years later they practically acknowledged that the view of their opponents was right by restoring the Mahárájá to his throne. In fact this is by no means the only case where the British member, in spite of that colossal ignorance with which he is charged, has been found to see further and deeper than the officials whom he has had the temerity to criticise. It is only to be wished that there were more members to support Sir William Wedderburn in the House, and those who heard Sir Charles Dilke's fine speech in the discussion that followed Sir William's address must have agreed with him in wishing that two in particular who have no longer seats in the House might return to defend the Indian cause—that Mr. Naoroji might once more speak for his native country, and that another old member might once more denounce the "political hypocrisy" that governed our relations with India, and might again recall to the unwilling ears of Ministers that our rule was based on the principle that "India must be bled." It is true that Sir Charles added to his wish a proviso that they should both re-enter with unchanged opinions, lest these bold words that were uttered by Lord Robert Cecil might no longer please the Marquis of Salisbury.

It should be noted that those who are now endeavouring to make Parliamentary control a reality are not engaged in introducing something new. On the contrary such control was at one time far more effective than now; and that enquiry and interference which is so much resented by the officials of the present day was accepted as a matter of course by some of the greatest administrators that have ruled our Indian Empire. It is indeed a melancholy reflection that the Government is more irresponsible to-day than it has ever been before. In the old times of the Company it was held in check in two ways, for there was first the natural jealousy with which Parliament and Ministry alike looked upon so wealthy and powerful a chartered monopoly. Instead of identity of interest, the unholy brotherhood which unites the Secretary of State with his subordinates, and even embraces the holder of that great office in the preceding Ministry, there was a decided feeling of opposition; so that the errors of the Company and its men were blazoned before the world and the secrets of the prison-house could not remain hid. And secondly, there was the great enquiry into the affairs of India every twenty years at the time of the periodical renewal of the charter. Now enquiry is uniformly refused —even into the work of the Calcutta Municipality, though threatened with destruction, even into the position of the rayat though the question whether he is growing poorer or more prosperous is so vital to the well-being of the great majority of the people of India. As Sir William Wedderburn pointed out, the village community is the microcosm of all India, and all that is needed is that in a few selected villages an examination should be made by commissioners, official and non-official; but even this is not granted. It is not surprising that many are beginning to doubt whether the substitution for the Company of the Empire which began with such magnificent promises and has resulted in such poor performance was an unmixed benefit. Sir Charles Dilke gave voice to this sentiment when he told the meeting how at the time of the extinction of the East India Company he had been inclined to think that the protest of John Stuart Mill was due to a bias sprung from his long connexion with that body, but that now he saw how much ground there was for the views his master then expressed.

One point of great importance was urged by Mr. Weld, who spoke from long experience of India, and that was the danger of showing distrust of the Indians. He told how the Indians saw the Russians treating the Tartars as their equals, and placing their troops under the leadership of a Tartar general, and how in comparison the amenities of English rule seemed of little value; and therefore he called on the English Government to open wide the career of arms to the Indians. The power of Hannibal received its first check in the treachery of a Moorish officer who had been stung by the contempt of the Carthaginians. The contempt and distrust of the English for the Indians is the greatest danger that threatens our Indian Empire. Who, then, is the true patriot, Lord George

Hamilton and those who will not trust even the bravest of the Indians, or Sir William Wedderburn and those who act with him in desiring to make the Indians participators in the glories of our rule, to trust them and by trusting them to make them worthy of our confidence, as their bravery has already made them worthy of our honour and esteem?

THE GREAT INDIAN EPICS.[1]

TO the famous library of Mr. Bohn, to which the great Carlyle once expressed his gratitude (and to which, it might be added, many a schoolboy has felt a gratitude that he has not ventured to express), has been added an account of the two chief Indian epics. The library was begun in days when the public taste was not critical, and it was thought enough for a classic

To be translated as a poet should
In prose by Watson and in verse by Good.

Modern taste and modern scholarship are more exacting, and Messrs. Bell, as Mr. Bohn's successors, have done not a little in recent years to make the volumes of their Greek and Latin translations more adequate to the needs of the present generation of readers. It is matter for regret, therefore, that in determining to include the Indian epics, they have not secured a more adequate representation of them than is contained in this volume. A "standard" library ought surely to consist of "standard" books—not merely of books upon "standard" subjects. "Standard" is an epithet which may be justly applied to the epics, but not to Mr. Oman's somewhat sketchy and superficial treatment of them. To one disqualification for his task—his ignorance of Sanscrit—Mr. Oman confesses so frankly that it seems incumbent on a reviewer to be equally frank, and admit his own ignorance of that language. It is not with this disqualification that we would reproach Mr. Oman (though the work of one who could deal with the original poems would obviously have been far more satisfactory), but with such deficiencies of critical judgment and literary taste as go far to deprive his work of all possible value. His method is to tell in outline, with running comment and quotations from published translations, the story of the two epics. For the "Ramayana" he has used the admirable poetical version of Mr. Griffith (to which he applies the altogether inadequate epithet "agreeable") and the prose translation of Mr. M. N. Dutt. For the "Mahabharata" he has followed the prose translation of Mr. Pratap Chundur Roy. Mr. Romesh Dutt's delightful English rendering (reviewed in INDIA of January 13) was not published in time to be exploited for Mr. Oman's purpose; but he might have availed himself more freely than he has done of Dean Milman and Sir Edwin Arnold. Mr. Oman's sins, however, are in his comments rather than in his quotations. Whilst he has a sincere admiration for some of the great qualities of the epics, he constantly betrays his uncritical sense by a remark which is either unjust or so obvious as to be unnecessary. "Markandeya's description of the dissolution and recreation of the world has undoubtedly a certain grandiose character about it, but betrays the extremely limited geographical knowledge of these omniscient sages." Exactly; and the remark would be equally true, and equally pointless, if it were made about Homer. "There is, in the Mahabharata generally, an affectation of precision in regard to numbers, as when the narrator informs us that such an one was hit with *three* arrows, another with *four*, and a third with *seven*." But this precision is not "affected": it is found in the primitive ballads of every nation: it is part of the vivid, definite, concrete way in which the poet sees and describes things. In spite of his affection for his theme, Mr. Oman repeatedly makes himself merry over the grotesque elements in the epics. To a certain extent this is a harmless and legitimate amusement. We can all enjoy Richard Doyle's schoolboy sketch of Achilles making tea and toast for the ambassadors in his tent without losing aught of our reverence for Homer. But we do not want our expositors to tell us where we ought to laugh. And sometimes one suspects that the grotesqueness is rather due to the use of some incongruous word in the translation than to any innate grotesqueness of idea. To address a goddess as "thou that bearest excellent braces on thy upper arm" may well provoke a smile, but it should be at the expense of the translator. The commonplace character of Mr. Oman's own English is a more serious blemish than these incongruities. Sentences like "his next solicitude was for his canine companion," are only too frequent. He who guides us to the poets should himself be poetical, and from this sentence at least Mr. Oman might have been saved by recollecting the simplicity and pathos of a familiar line in English poetry. Lastly, there is evidence of an uncritical temper in matters other than literary. To account for the permanence of a religious tradition by the existence of a hereditary priesthood living on the proceeds of the shrines (p. 202) is to fall back upon an explanation long since discarded by serious students of the natural history of religion. It is not pleasant to be compelled to find so many faults in a work that seems to have been a labour of love to the writer and intended to testify to his genuine admiration for the classics he seeks to expound. The volume is illustrated by several interesting photographs.

[1] "The Great Indian Epics: The Stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata." By John Campbell Oman, Principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar. (Bohn's Standard Library.) London: George Bell and Sons.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

(FROM A PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

WHEN the House met on Thursday, March 9, the air was thick with rumour. Mr. Goschen was to introduce his Navy Estimates, and while everyone knew that they would show an enormous increase no one knew exactly what that increase would be. Hitherto it has been the custom of governments on such occasions to issue a printed memorandum giving the statistical details, so that even the bothered and hurried member of Parliament can grasp them. But this year Mr. Balfour gravely announced a day or two in advance that this memorandum would be withheld on grounds of public policy. Of course this caused the wildest possible conjecture. There were those who said that this meant some terrible threat to the other great Powers, and indeed the gossip and what is called "wild-cat rumour" which ensued was far more mischievous than any effect which could have resulted from the usual straightforward course having been pursued.

The naval estimates statement was certainly sensational enough when it came, but there was nothing in it to justify this suppression of the memorandum. We are adding about three millions to the naval estimates this year; we added a large sum last year, and now our annual expenditure on the navy approaches thirty millions; nor is there any sign that we have approached a time when governments will cry, Hold, enough. We are going in for more men, more ships, more guns, more ammunition, and indeed more everything, which necessarily means more millions. In these circumstances there seemed something almost grotesque in the references Mr. Goschen kept making to the forthcoming conference on disarmament. I am not one of those who think that the Tsar's proposal is something to be dismissed with a sneer. On the contrary I have from the first regarded it as a sincere attempt to check the hideous and ruinous policy of beggar-your-neighbour in which the great Powers are engaged. The Tsar himself, I say, is, I believe, sincere, though his ministers are probably like the ministers of other countries, not overweighted with candour.

And yet while all the nations of the world are expressing themselves as delighted at having the opportunity of meeting in order to talk about stopping the further growth of armaments, they are all increasing their armies, navies, and armaments of all sorts. Mr. Goschen was quite pathetic, so far as we are concerned. He said we did not like this style of thing at all, but we were forced into it by others. The wicked "others" set the pace, according to Mr. Goschen, and we were forced to keep up. Everyone of the other Powers says exactly the same thing about all the others. It is as profitless a squabble of recrimination as that of the schoolboys who keep on saying "Yah, you're another," and keep on saying this until they fight. Perchance the Powers will yet fight in order to prove which is the most zealous advocate of peace and which the most anxious for the millennium. I am afraid that in this mad race of competitive armaments we are at least as much to blame as anyone, for we began it.

It takes a good deal of courage, however, for any man in the House of Commons to stand up and oppose this crazy expenditure. In no place in the world is a nickname more feared than in that House, and while the expression "little Englander" is the merest slang, and stupid slang too, it has a big influence. Again, in no place in the world is a sophism more effectual than in the House of Commons, and members are for ever trying not only to deceive each other, but they make even more sedulous attempts to deceive themselves. I know not how often lately I have heard good respectable

members arguing that the bigger our navy is the more secure is peace. We are spending all these millions on warlike preparations, on swifter cruisers, larger and more deadly guns, more terribly effective powder, and all the thousand and one details of the paraphernalia of war—for what do you suppose? All in the interests of peace.

There was something curious about Mr. Goschen's suggested "deal," to use a word which is applied to smaller matters, with the other Powers. He seemed to see the absurdity of advocating all this addition to our fighting power just as we are going to send representatives to a peace conference; so he said if the other Powers would reduce their proposed increase of naval and military service we would also; but if not, then not. And Mr. Goschen sneered broadly at trusting to "the sweet reasonableness of Europe," in a manner which showed how little he thinks of the prospects of the conference ushering in the millennium. I have already spoken of his holding back the memorandum usually distributed on these occasions. There was a very strong feeling of indignation about this, a feeling by no means confined to one side of the House. Mr. Goschen attempted an explanation of this unusual step. It was this. He felt that had the figures showing the enormous all round increase in our navy been ascertained by other Powers before his soothing assurances that they meant nothing had been made public all sorts of unnecessary excitement would have ensued. There is only one word for this, and it is "bosh." The excitement founded on conjecture is always the worst, and it was so in this case. Moreover there could have been no harm in distributing the figures at the commencement of the speech, whereas they were not obtainable until quite a couple of hours after Mr. Goschen had sat down. An old and experienced member said to me afterwards, "Well, Goschen is not an easy speaker to understand, but one thing is clear enough even without a printed memorandum, and that is that if we don't get another penny on the income-tax we may think ourselves lucky." I wonder what the starving poor of India think of the freedom with which we fling millions about on such matters and cannot spare a halfpenny for them. There are all sorts of splendid institutions at home, too, hospitals and the like, which are in debt, and apparently staggering to bankruptcy for want of funds; but while there are countless millions for warlike preparations (all in the interest of peace!) nothing can be done for the aged poor because of the lack of funds.

A very instructive little incident took place in the House last Friday night. Sir Howard Vincent, the inspired apostle of Protection all over the world, asked Lord George Hamilton if the Government of India had with the approval of the Secretary of State determined to levy a countervailing duty on the importation of foreign bounty-fed sugar. Of course everyone knew what the answer was going to be, for the subject is by no means new; but Sir Howard no doubt wanted to call attention to the progress of the cause. So he cheered with a sort of divine fury and rapture when that weak creature Lord George Hamilton said that such a Bill had been introduced with his assent into the Legislative Council at Calcutta. Then up jumped Mr. Maclean. He is a gentleman who may or may not be right in all his views about India, but he has at least the advantage of knowing what he is talking about. The chief danger against which the friends of India have to guard in the British Parliament is stolid and self-satisfied ignorance, the mental attitude of what Milton has called the "steadfast dunce." Mr. Maclean had just landed in England from India, and with a ring of indignation in his voice he asked if the Secretary of State would allow the House of Commons to consider this change of policy before it was carried into effect. Lord George with an absurd affectation of hauteur replied, "I have no intention whatsoever of interfering with the independence of the local legislature," and Sir Howard Vincent and his little gang cheered and chortled and chuckled noisily. But above this din the voice of Mr. Maclean could be heard, now raised to something like a shout, asking, "Does the noble lord remember how he interfered with that independence in the case of the cotton duties?" There was a rattling cheer from the Opposition, while Lord George sat without a word to say for himself. I happen to know that Mr. Maclean feels so strongly on this matter that he would like to move the adjournment of the House about it. Indeed he let it be known that he meant to do so, and in so doing he made a tactical blunder. Anyone who wishes to move the adjournment should keep his intention a profound secret, otherwise the enemy may trip him up by what is known as a blocking notice. It has been so with Mr. Maclean. Sir Howard Vincent has put down the following notice of motion:—

> Sugar Bounties.—That this House congratulates the Government of His Excellency Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy of India, upon the determination shown to safeguard National and Native industrial interests by the decision to levy countervailing duties upon Foreign bounty-fed sugar imported into the Indian Empire, and expresses the hope that her Majesty's Government will in the near future decide upon similar grounds to initiate like legislation in this House, having regard to the injury caused to the sugar industries and their allied trades in Great Britain by the operation of the bounties, and the pecuniary burdens imposed upon the taxpayers of the United Kingdom by the consequent depressed, distressed, and discontented condition of the West Indian Colonies.

And so Mr. Maclean has lost his chance for the present, and Lord Curzon and the weak man over here who is humorously pretended to rule at the India Office can do as they like.

CHRONICLE OF THE WEEK.

THURSDAY, March 9.—In the House of Commons Mr. Goschen made the annual statement in presenting the Navy Estimates. The proposed expenditure showed an increase of nearly three millions sterling on last year, the total estimates being twenty-six and a-half millions.—The Sale of Food and Drugs Bill was read a second time by 212 to 18.—The Metropolitan Water Companies Bill was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee.—The Telephone Communication Bill was brought in and read a first time.

The formal opening of the new extension to London of the Great Central Railway took place. A luncheon was held at the Marylebone terminus, at which Mr. Ritchie, M.P., President of the Board of Trade, was presented with a plan of the new railway on vellum enclosed in a silver casket. After responding to the toast of his health, he proceeded to the platform of the station and started the first train from the terminus.

It was reported from Cairo that no active steps would be taken at present against the Khalifa unless he himself precipitated hostilities; but if lack of supplies did not cause him either to take the initiative or to lose his following, action would probably be taken against him a few months hence. In the meantime the Omdurman garrison was ready to take the field in order to check any decided advance.

The Tsung-li-Yamên informed the Italian Minister in Peking that they had returned his despatch because it was impossible to grant his request, and a refusal might have endangered the relations between the two Powers; but, as their action had been misunderstood, they had instructed the Chinese Minister in Rome to express their regrets to the Italian Government.

FRIDAY, March 10.—In the House of Commons the consideration of the Civil Service Supplementary Estimates was resumed in Committee of Supply, and various votes were agreed to, the House rising shortly after seven o'clock.

From Peking it was reported that, according to trustworthy information from St. Petersburg, Russia had withdrawn her opposition to the Northern Railway loan, leaving on record, however, a declaration that the contract disregarded the conditions of the pre-existing engagement entered into by China with Russia.

At to-day's sitting of the Legislative Council in Calcutta Sir James Westland introduced a Bill imposing a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar imported into India. He stated that the importation of the bounty-fed sugar was seriously affecting the Indian producer, and had already led to the closing of many refineries.

Mr. Rhodes arrived in Berlin. He had asked for an audience of the Emperor, who was understood to have acceded to the request. The German journals stated that Mr. Rhodes's object was to effect an arrangement as to the construction of a section of his Cape to Cairo railway through German territory, and the *National-Zeitung* anticipated that he would be successful, and contended that his success would not be injurious to German colonial interests in Africa.

SATURDAY, March 11.—It was reported that a reconnaissance ordered by the Sirdar had found the Khalifa's force in its former position near Lake Shirkeleh. A squadron of cavalry had been sent up the left bank of the White Nile from Omdurman to watch the approaches from El Obeid to Abbah Island. The Sirdar was about to make a tour of inspection in the Eastern Sudan.

Signor Martino, the Italian Minister in Peking, yesterday sent a despatch to the Tsung-li-Yamên, calling upon them to request the return of his previous despatch, to accede to its demands, and to resume negotiations. Four days were given for a reply. It was said that at present the Chinese showed no disposition to give way, and that stronger measures would be necessary to enforce compliance. The Tsung-li-Yamên was entirely ignorant of the place of Italy among the nations. The Belgian Minister was still pressing his claim for a concession at Han-kau.

Mr. Rhodes was received by the Emperor William, and had an audience lasting three-quarters of an hour. He had previously visited the Imperial Chancellor, the Foreign Secretary, and the British Ambassador. During the day he was present at a sitting of the Reichstag when a discussion arose in reference to the treatment of foreign railway undertakings in German colonies. Allusion was made to Mr. Rhodes's visit to Berlin, and the Director of the Colonial Department stated that negotiations were being carried on with the object of carrying the Central African Railway across German territory. The negotiations were not yet completed, but it was certain that the construction of the railway through German territory

would only take place if German interests in Africa were guaranteed in the widest sense and in all their bearings.

MONDAY, March 13.—In the House of Commons Mr. Pritchard Morgan obtained leave to move the adjournment of the House in order to call attention to the support given by her Majesty's representative at Peking to the demands of Italy for a sphere of interest in China and for a naval base in Sanmun Bay.—Discussion of the Navy Estimates was resumed.

Sir E. Grey, M.P., speaking at Reading at a meeting held in connexion with the conference of the Home Counties Liberal Federation, devoted his remarks chiefly to the situation in the Far East. He complained of the lack of definite information as to the aims and policy of the Government in China, and strongly advocated a friendly understanding with Russia, which, he contended, might very well be brought about on the basis of the enlightened self-interest of both countries.

From Peking it was reported that the Tsung-li-Yamên, in reply to the second despatch of the Italian Minister, said that they were persuaded that their reasons for returning the despatch containing the demands were misunderstood, and they requested that it be sent back to them; but regarding the demands themselves they said nothing, and this was interpreted as implying that they adhered to their determination to grant none of them.—In the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies M. Franz Major addressed to the Government an interpellation respecting the alleged plans of Austria-Hungary in China, and advocated an expansive commercial policy. No answer was given to the interpellation.

The trial of M. Urbain Gohier for defaming and insulting the army in the series of articles, originally published in the *Aurore*, which were subsequently brought out in book form under the title "L'Armée contre la Nation," began at the Seine Assizes in Paris. The charge was based on a number of passages separated from their context. A large number of witnesses were called for the defence, and deposed to the correctness of M. Gohier's statements and to the good service he had rendered in exposing military abuses. Evidence of this kind was still proceeding when the court adjourned.

TUESDAY, March 14.—In the House of Lords the Duke of Devonshire introduced the Secondary Education Bill.

In the House of Commons the South-Eastern and London, Chatham and Dover Railway Companies' Bill was read a second time and referred to a hybrid Committee.—Mr. Chamberlain introduced his Bill to empower local authorities to advance money for enabling the occupiers of small houses to become owners of them.—The consideration of the Army Estimates was resumed in Committee of Supply.

A Blue-book was issued containing the correspondence between Lord Salisbury and Sir Claude Macdonald, the British Ambassador at Peking, on the political events of the past year in China. The concession of Wei-Hai-Wei, the extension of the boundaries of Hong Kong, and what Lord Salisbury termed "the battle of concessions" were among the subjects dealt with in the earlier portion of the four hundred odd despatches included in the publication. In July Lord Salisbury said the battle of concessions did not seem to be going well for us, but Sir Claude Macdonald pointed out that this was a mistake. The opening of Nanning as a treaty port and the proposed extension of the French settlement at Shanghai afterwards engaged attention. On the latter question Sir Claude Macdonald warned the French Ambassador of dangers in front of him if the demand was persisted in, and Lord Salisbury gave instructions that a protest should be made to the Yamên, with an intimation that China would be supported, materially if necessary, if she acceded to the British demand, and any departure from it would be resented.

Lady Ridley, the wife of the Home Secretary, died. Lady Ridley, who was a daughter of the first Lord Tweedmouth, was born in 1850.

The trial of M. Urbain Gohier on the charge of defaming the army was concluded at the Seine Assizes. At a late hour in the evening the jury found M. Gohier not guilty.

WEDNESDAY, March 15.—In the House of Commons the motion for the second reading of Mr. Harold Reckitt's Bill (to raise the flash-point of petroleum to 100 degrees) was rejected by 244 votes to 159.

It was reported from Berlin that an agreement had been arrived at between Mr. Rhodes and the German Government regarding the construction of a section of the Cape-to-Cairo telegraph line through German East Africa. There were still some difficulties of detail to be overcome in connexion with the railway scheme, but no doubt was said to be entertained that satisfactory arrangements would eventually be made. The Disconto-Gesellschaft was willing to finance the whole German portion of the scheme on condition of a guarantee by the German Government. Mr. Rhodes thought that if this guarantee were granted the British Government would probably follow suit for the rest of the undertaking.

The Indian Parliamentary Committee has been fortunate enough to secure in the ballot the third place for motions on Tuesday, April 11. Captain Norton and others have accordingly given notice "to call attention to the want of Parliamentary control over Indian affairs, and to move a resolution."

INDIA IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"JUSTICE TO INDIA—HOW NOT TO DO IT."

ADDRESS BY SIR W. WEDDERBURN, M.P., TO THE "LIBERAL FORWARDS."

SPEECHES BY MR. C. E. SCHWANN, M.P., SIR CHARLES DILKE, M.P., MR. SAMUEL SMITH, M.P., MR. H. J. WILSON, M.P., AND MR. ROBINSON SOUTTAR, M.P.

[FROM OUR OWN REPORTER.]

There was a crowded and enthusiastic meeting at the club-house of the "Liberal Forwards," St. Ermin's Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W., on Tuesday night last, when Sir William Wedderburn, M.P., Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, delivered an address on "India in the House of Commons." Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P., presided, and among those who were present were Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., Mr. Robinson Souttar, M.P., Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., Mr. H. J. Wilson, M.P., Mr. J. Herbert Roberts, M.P., Mr. Robert Cameron, M.P., Miss Brooke-Hunt, Miss G. Brooke-Hunt, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Mr. P. W. Clayden, Mr. W. Martin Wood, Professor A. F. Murison, LL.D., Mr. S. H. Swinny, Mr. Gordon Hewart, Mr. W. Douglas Hall, and Mr. A. G. Symonds. Other members of Parliament had agreed to attend the meeting if possible, but were detained by business in the House of Commons. Among these were Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Mr. C. P. Scott, Mr. Philip Stanhope, Mr. J. M. Maclean, Captain Norton, Mr. MacKenna, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Hazell, Mr. Buchanan, and Mr. Duckworth. The meeting was a brilliant success, the various speakers being heard throughout with the closest attention.

The CHAIRMAN in opening the proceedings remarked that they had come to hear an address from Sir William Wedderburn—(cheers)—to whom the House of Commons and the people of India owed such a deep debt of gratitude. (Hear, hear.) There was now an Indian party in the House of Commons, not numerous, but numerous enough to move the adjournment whenever the necessity arose, and as there was a great element of young men amongst them there were great hopes for the future. Their only regret was that the opportunities of bringing India before the House were so few. In his opinion if India were ever lost it would be through the neglect of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) If the question of Chitral for instance had been brought before the House, the common sense of the House would never have approved of putting on a mountain ridge in snowy regions a small body of men supporting a potentate who had very little strength of his own. He also thought that the common sense of the House would never have agreed to give the pledge of making no road, and directly we achieved our object proceeding to violate our troth and build the road. (Cheers.) It was often asked what information could be possessed about India by the critics in the House, but they would remember the occasion when Mr. Bradlaugh called the attention of the House to the question of the Mahárájá of Kashmir, this ruler being described by the officials as a worthless, dissolute, drunken fellow, and the Resident as a sort of protecting angel. Mr. Bradlaugh's information from India was, however, that the truth was quite the reverse of this. There was a debate and a division, and the result was that though the Mahárájá was sent away, two years after he was sent back again by the Indian Government. This showed that the members who took an interest in India were not so badly informed by their friends. (Cheers.) Then there were the Press laws which had outraged the feelings of every Englishman—(hear, hear)—and which had been introduced in a moment of panic. No doubt the Europeans in India might have felt some concern, but probably if the question had been submitted to the House of Commons they would have taken a more cool view of the matter, and would have been able to repair the shattered nerves of our people in India. (Hear, hear.) The intervention of the House of Commons in the attempt to abolish trial by jury in Bengal led to this measure not being carried out; and there was the recent case of the Calcutta Municipality Bill which also he hoped would be dropped. With reference to the proposed application of countervailing sugar duties in India it was a remarkable fact that Lord George Hamilton, who three or four years ago was distinctly against the introduction of cotton duties in India, was now just as hot in favour of the introduction of sugar duties. They were not to be like the cotton duties, for the purpose of raising revenue, but were specifically stated to be for protective objects. He did not know whether this scheme would please Mr. Naoroji and his friends, but it certainly placed the Government in a rather peculiar position. (Hear, hear.) But they all recognised that though it was the voice of Lord George Hamilton it was the hand of Jacob—he meant Joseph. (Laughter.) For all these reasons he maintained that it was still desirable occasionally to bring India before the House, and he again repeated that if India were ever lost it would be largely through the neglect of the House of Commons. (Cheers.) He called upon Sir William Wedderburn to deliver his address.

SIR WILLIAM WEDDERBURN, who was most cordially received, said: Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—My object in addressing you

this evening is to explain, a little in detail, the extreme difficulty, I may almost say impossibility, of obtaining from Parliament any redress of Indian grievances. I am anxious to enlist your practical sympathy in this matter—(hear, hear)—and for this purpose will place before you the result of my own experience, which will show how discouraging is the task of those who desire to bring before the House of Commons the Indian view of Indian questions. By the Indian view I mean the view taken by the Indian taxpayers, the great mass of the people, as distinguished from the view taken by the official governing class of Anglo-Indians. In almost every case that arises the popular opinion with regard to events, their causes and consequences, differs entirely from the official opinion; but it is the official opinion which alone decides everything, and that practically without appeal. What we want is that the popular opinion should get a hearing. (Hear, hear.) Let me illustrate my meaning. In Ireland there is a Dublin Castle way of looking at every question; and there is generally quite an opposite view taken by the great bulk of the Irish people. But the view of Dublin Castle prevails; although the people of Ireland have the vote, and although their views are vigorously and continuously voiced by 82 Nationalist members in the House of Commons. On the other hand poor India has not a single vote, and not a single representative in Parliament. What chance has she then of being heard? A good and homely proverb tells us that no one knows where the shoe pinches except the wearer. But the high and mighty Anglo-Indian officials at Simla do not believe this. They make the shoes—(laughter)—and the duty of the Indian taxpayer is to wear these shoes, and to say that he enjoys wearing them. (Hear, hear.) If he does not do so he is ungrateful; not to say seditious. Indeed, if he complains in India he is showing disaffection, and, under the new sedition laws, is punishable with a long term of imprisonment. His only hope is to get a hearing in this country. (Hear, hear.) For this purpose the people of India have organised their public opinion; and each year, through the Indian National Congress—(applause)—they send to England a clear statement of their sufferings, their needs, and their aspirations. But they have no means of compelling the attention either of Parliament or the British public. To use the poetic words of Edmund Burke, "the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean."

WANTED: REAL PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL.

To proceed now to practical details, I will begin by assuming that the British people honestly desire that justice should be done to India. We admit our national duty in this matter. (Hear, hear.) The question is, How do we fulfil this duty? It is no light task to secure justice for 250 millions of people living 6,000 miles away. We give these people no voice in the management of their own affairs; and entrust these affairs absolutely to our official agents, a handful of Europeans, who administer the country by means of a horde of ill-paid and often corrupt Native subordinates. How do we exercise control over these official agents? Under so purely bureaucratic a system of government grievances must necessarily arise. What machinery exists in Parliament or elsewhere for hearing complaints and redressing grievances? I say advisedly, and from bitter experience of many years, that practically no control at all is exercised; and that when the Indians suffer wrong, whether it is an individual, or a class, or the whole people, there exists no machinery through which justice can be obtained. ("Shame.") The theory, of course, is that the Secretary of State for India is responsible to Parliament, and that in dealing with Indian complaints he occupies a position of judicial impartiality. But this is altogether a delusion. The Secretary of State for India, being backed by the Ministerial majority, is, in Indian matters, practically the master, not the servant, of the House of Commons—(hear, hear)—and so far from being an impartial judge, ready to hear complaints and eager to afford redress, he is in reality the mouthpiece and champion of the official hierarchy, against whom the complaints are made. Deriving his views and information solely from the India Office, he becomes naturally the apologist of all official acts, and resents every complaint as a reflection upon the administration of which he is himself the head. What we want is that the control of Parliament and the redress of grievances should be made a wholesome reality instead of a discreditable sham; and it is the manifest duty of the British public to see that this is done. (Applause.) Until this is done, our expressed desire to do justice to India is little better than national hypocrisy. We are like the man in the scriptures who says to the naked and hungry, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," but gives them neither food nor clothing.

FROM AKBAR TO LORD G. HAMILTON.

Mr. John Stuart Mill has put this point of national duty very plainly. In his book on "Representative Government," he points out that our position in India is that of one nation exercising despotic rule over another nation. But despotism by a nation is not necessarily a good thing, any more than despotism by a home-bred autocrat; and Mr. Mill enquires by what course of conduct we can justify our national domination over India. In history there have been many good home-bred despots, a Cyrus, a Trajan, and an Akbar the Great. (Hear, hear.) Poor humanity has seldom been happier, for the time being, than under the rule of such men. But unfortunately a Cyrus may be succeeded by a Cambyses, a Trajan by a Domitian, an Akbar by an Aurangzib. Accordingly Mr. Mill points out that "under a native despotism a good despot is a rare and transitory accident; but when the dominion is that of a more civilised people, that people ought to be able to supply it constantly." That is the ideal for our Indian rule. The Secretary of State for India now exercises the despotic power of the Great Mogul. Our duty is to find always an Akbar to be our Secretary of State for India. (Hear, hear.) In this we have not as yet been successful. In the meantime we have only found a Lord George Hamilton. (Laughter and cheers.) Mr. Mill admits that we cannot hope to see the ideal fully realised, but on the other hand he insists almost fiercely on our national responsibility as regards this ideal; and says that "unless some approach to it is made the rulers are guilty of a dereliction of the highest moral trust which can devolve upon a nation; and if they do not even aim at it, they are selfish usurpers, on a par in criminality with any of those whose ambition and rapacity have sported from age to age with the destiny of masses of mankind." I ask whether we as a nation have done anything to clear ourselves of these grave imputation? It used to be said of the great Akbar that he sat with four doors open; that is, a hearing was given to all who had complaints, whether they came from the north or the south, the east or the west. He lived in India; he understood the people, their language and their feelings; he knew their needs, and sympathised with their aspirations; he was both willing and able to redress their grievances. Our system of selection has raised Lord George Hamilton to the seat of power. How does he fill the place of the great home-bred despot? (Laughter.) He is of course under great natural disadvantages. He has never been in India; he does not know a word of any Indian language; he has probably not spoken to a dozen independent Indians in the course of his life; while his information and inspiration are drawn exclusively from the India Office, which is the home and stronghold of officialdom's innermost clique; a sort of Dublin Castle, only more so. (Hear, hear.) Labouring under these natural disadvantages, what steps does Lord George Hamilton take to strengthen his position as an impartial court of appeal? Does he make independent enquiry into the facts? Does he give a friendly hearing to those who represent Indian public opinion? Does he, in dealing with complaints, show an anxious desire to redress grievances? Not at all. Again and again on important occasions, when the facts were in dispute, we have asked for independent enquiry as to these facts. But never once, in all these years, has such an enquiry been granted. ("Shame.") The most recent example is that of the Calcutta municipality, a representative body, the majority of whom are elected by the Calcutta ratepayers. This representative municipality has done good work for the last 20 years; its sanitation and water supply have received the cordial approval of every Lieutenant Governor of Bengal; it has been successful in keeping the plague out of Calcutta. (Cheers.) But as part of a general policy of reaction and repression it is now sought to destroy the representative character of this great municipality, and to hand it back to the official management which before proved itself to be inefficient. A Bill for this purpose has been brought in the Bengal Legislative Council, and my friend Mr. Herbert Roberts moved, as an amendment to the Address, that public enquiry should be made into the work of the municipality, and a hearing given to the ratepayers, before upsetting an institution which has admittedly done good work for 20 years. It seemed a reasonable request that evidence should be taken, and the accused party heard, before he is condemned and executed. But that was not Lord George Hamilton's view, and the enquiry was refused. May I give one other instance? I am specially interested in the rayats, the peasant cultivators who form the mass of the Indian population. Now there is an irreconcileable difference of opinion as to the condition of the rayat. The India Office myth is that he is a fat and comfortable person, increasing each year in prosperity, pleasantly conscious of the blessings of British rule. On the other hand all Indian public opinion knows that he is a miserable starveling; hopelessly in debt to the money-lender; without store of food, money, or credit; living from hand to mouth; so that he readily dies from famine if there is a failure of one harvest. Here is a clear issue of fact; and again and again I have asked for a detailed village enquiry, which would settle the point. No expense to speak of need be incurred. No commission need go from England. All that is wanted is to select a few typical villages in each Province, and ascertain the detailed facts of the rayat's condition, the enquiry being conducted by independent local Committees including officials and non-officials, Europeans and Indians. The village community is the microcosm of all India, if we could find out how to make one village prosperous, we should have the clue to make prosperous the half million of villages of which India is made up. (Hear, hear.) Twice I have moved resolutions to this effect in the House of Commons, and on both occasions have been met by a refusal. Why should Government refuse such an enquiry, unless it is

because they do not wish disagreeable truths to be made known to the public? Their whole policy is one of secrecy and obscurantism. The invariable House of Commons routine is to refuse all independent enquiry; to refer complaints for report to the official complained against; and when that official pleads not guilty, to assure the House that no grievance exists. (Laughter.) In addition to this the Indian Secretary usually tells the questioner, amid enthusiastic Ministerial cheers, that he is libelling the noblest body of public servants the world ever saw. (Laughter.) And the London Press, being in Indian matters mostly guided by Anglo-Indian opinion, re-echoes these sentiments, and holds up the inconvenient questioner to the scorn of all true patriots. From the above it will be seen that Lord George Hamilton does not come up to the standard of the great Akbar as a protector of the weak against the strong; and that we are a long way from fulfilling Mr. Mill's ideal.

NO FEAR OF THE BRITISH ELECTOR.

But it may be asked, how is it that in all other departments those who bring forward grievances do not experience the same difficulties? In all other departments they are courteously treated by Ministers, who give a ready hearing to complaints, never refuse enquiry, and generally discover some means of redress. The reason is a simple one. In all other departments there are votes behind the grievance—(hear, hear)—and these no Minister can afford to disregard. Also if a Member does not receive satisfaction, he can punish the Minister in Supply by moving a reduction of his salary, and by impeding the vote for the service of his department. These potent remedies are not within the reach of the Member who is flouted by the Indian Secretary. In Indian questions alone there is no fear of the British elector. Also the Indian Secretary is conveniently free from the ordeal of getting through votes on the British estimates, while his own salary is beyond the reach of the House of Commons, for he pays himself direct out of the Indian Exchequer.

"CAELUM NON ANIMUM MUTAT."

It will thus be seen that the Indian reformer in the House of Commons does not repose on a bed of roses. I do not wish to weary you; and I will now only add two more points in which he is at a special disadvantage. In all other departments the Ex-Minister, sitting on the front Opposition bench, takes the lead in criticising the doings of his successor on the Treasury bench. But this is not the case as regards India. The Ex-Minister during his term of office has become so thoroughly saturated—(hear, hear)—with the spirit and traditions of the India Office, that he cannot emancipate himself when he crosses to the Opposition side: *Caelum non animum mutat.* Thus as regards the calamities through which poor India has passed during the last three years; the famine, the plague, the press prosecutions, the Natu imprisonments, the new Sedition law, Sir Henry Fowler has been worse than useless. (Hear, hear.) It is true that he raised his voice in favour of an imperial grant to India, and made an excellent speech on Mr. Roberts' motion regarding the Calcutta municipality. But when Indian grievances are debated he seldom emerges from obscurity; and when he does, it is generally to pour indiscriminate praise on Anglo-Indian officials, or to make an attack on the independent Members of his own party. (Hear, hear, and cries of "Shame.") The remaining point, to which I will only briefly refer, is the notorious scandal by which the so-called Indian Budget debate is relegated to the last day of the Session, when most independent Members have left London, and when the small residue of the House, kept together by the lash of the party whip, are eager to be gone, and grudge every half hour given to debate. Is this an assembly, and an occasion, suitable to deal justly and effectively with the financial affairs of 250 millions of our fellow citizens, for whom we are responsible? I remember a distinguished Indian friend of mine, Mr. W. C. Bonnerjee—(hear, hear)—once told me that coming to England some years ago he visited the House of Commons to hear for the first time the great Indian Budget debate. When he came in Sir Roper Lethbridge was addressing the House, and his only audience was the Speaker. What an object lesson to set before the Indian people, as showing the care with which we fulfil our trust towards them! And what does the British Press, as the organ of public opinion, do to rebuke this shameful neglect of duty—(hear, hear)—and to encourage those who are fighting an uphill battle on behalf of defenceless India? With a few honourable exceptions the Press does little or nothing. On the contrary, as a general rule, the London papers and their reporters seem to find satisfaction and amusement in the fact that the House empties itself when India is discussed; and instead of giving moral support to the group of independent Members who try to get a hearing for India, they cover their own neglect of a public duty by calling them bores and faddists, and suggesting that their action is prompted by some mysterious and unaccountable, though malignant, dislike of their fellow countrymen. (Laughter.)

THE SYSTEM MUST BE ALTERED.

One hundred and twenty years ago Edmund Burke lamented this corrupted condition of public opinion in England, which, he said, "makes all reform of our Eastern government appear officious and disgusting; and, on the whole, a most discouraging attempt. In such an attempt you hurt those who are able to return kindness and resent injury. If you succeed, you save those who cannot so much as give you thanks. All these things show the difficulty of the work we have on hand: but they show its necessity too. Our Indian Government is in its best state a grievance. It is necessary that the correctives should be uncommonly vigorous; the work of men—sanguine, warm, and even impassioned in the cause. But it is an arduous thing to plead against abuses of a power which originate from your own country, and affects those whom we are used to consider as strangers." These words were spoken in the debate on Mr. Fox's East India Bill, when Mr. Burke made his noble, but unsuccessful, attempt to establish a just and effective control over the Indian bureaucracy. Sad to say, things are now much worse—(hear, hear, from Sir CHARLES DILKE)—than they were when these words were spoken, especially in two particulars. In those days India was administered in the name of the East India Company, and there existed a wholesome jealousy, both in the House of Commons and in the country, of a chartered monopoly. (Hear, hear, from Sir CHARLES DILKE.) That wholesome jealousy has been lulled to sleep since the Crown has openly assumed the administration. The other great benefit that India then enjoyed, and has now lost, was that every twenty years there was a full and impartial enquiry into the Indian administration, previous to the renewal of the charter (Hear, hear.) Out of these enquiries arose all the most useful and progressive reforms by which England has benefitted India. (Hear, hear.) Also the Company put its house in order, and redressed grievances, when these enquiries were in sight. Now all these benefits are lost. Since 1856 there has been no such enquiry; no day of reckoning for the Indian administration; and the Indian people are quite powerless to obtain that thorough and independent investigation into facts which used to come to them automatically and without effort once every twenty years.

Ladies and gentlemen,—this concludes my case. I still believe that the British people desire to do justice to India. (Hear, hear.) But if the desire is to be anything better than a pious opinion, they must alter the existing system in the House of Commons. At present that system is the ideal of "How not to do it." (Loud applause.)

Mr. DADABHAI NAOROJI, who had a very hearty reception, wished to emphasise the view that whenever Parliament had itself actually taken the matter of India in hand it had done what was right and proper as representing the British people. (Hear, hear.) He declared that Parliament had all along shown a desire to govern India righteously and to treat the Natives as British citizens. In 1833, when the Act was passed for the renewal of the East India Company's Charter a clause was put in which distinctly and emphatically declared what was to be the policy of Great Britain towards India, and this was as good as any Native desired, being that of making no distinction whatever either of colour, creed, or race, in the employment of the Indian people in His Majesty's service. What more could the people of India want? They merely wanted to be treated as British citizens and not as British slaves. (Cheers.) In 1853 Mr. Bright complained that the Indian natives were treated as if that Act had never been passed, and nothing resulted from the efforts made to give some effect to it. Then came the Mutiny to which he would not refer further than by saying that it was the fault of Great Britain herself. At the end of the Mutiny when the Indian people were on the floor, utterly dismayed, the British people and Parliament came handsomely forward with an even greater charter than that of 1833. This emphasised the statement that the Natives were to be treated exactly as British subjects, and if it had been carried out it would have been the greatest blessing both to India and England. (Hear, hear.) But to pass resolutions and issue proclamations was one thing, and to give execution to them was quite another thing. (Hear, hear.) In 1833 Sir Stafford Northcote gave a little relief in respect of carrying out the Act of 1833, but the Government of India could not bear this, and for years they ignored it until ultimately Lord Cranbrook compelled them to carry it out, though the Indian Government after all contrived so to mangle and mutilate it that they made it practically a dead letter. Again the Indians wanted simultaneous examinations in England and India, for unless this was done England kept the promise to the ear and broke it to the hope. It was literally true that the Indian Government and authorities had deceived the Indian people and that there were deliberate and transparent subterfuges in their conduct throughout the century. It was no use for the House of Commons to issue proclamations or carry resolutions which were either stolidly ignored or mangled by the Indian Government who refused to carry out resolutions in favour of the Natives. (Hear, hear.) The policy as regarded India had been very well expressed by Lord Salisbury as that of "bleeding India," and he had also pointed out that this whole system was simply based on political hypocrisy. (Hear, hear.) Lord Salisbury went on to say that the result was misery, and that the remedy was some form of self-government. (Cheers.) If the Government of India were conducted by Native administration, supervised by English supremacy, then alone would India benefit by the connexion with England. Otherwise he would ask them to remember that an explosion might happen in their own house when they were least prepared for it; and he declared that by ignoring the great force in India, of which the National Congress was a symbol, men like Sir Henry Fowler and Lord G. Hamilton were doing what was most likely to injure and destroy British rule in India. (Cheers.)

Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., said there were two old members they would all very much like to see back in the House of Commons with their old opinions. One of these was Mr. Naoroji, whose eloquence he trusted was only temporarily lost to the House, and the other was Lord Robert Cecil. It was a somewhat forgotten fact that some years ago Lord Robert Cecil was a very keen critic of Indian administration. He was afraid, however, that Lord Salisbury of the present day was not exactly the Lord Robert Cecil of the past, and therefore when he wished to have these two members back in the House of Commons it was accompanied by the hope that they would come with the same opinions as formerly. Many of those among them who belonged to Anglo-Indian households in the old Company's day were at the time of opinion that Mr. Mill was perhaps wrong upon one point. They could not but believe that his long family connexion and long personal connexion with the India House in the old day had led him to be somewhat prejudiced, philosopher as he was, in desiring the maintenance of the Company and in opposing the arrangements of 1858. But he (Sir Charles) was bound to say that the longer he had lived, and the more he had seen the conduct of Indian affairs in the House of Commons, the more he had come to doubt whether his great master even on that point was wrong. (Hear, hear.) At all events he fully felt the truth of the closing words of Sir William Wedderburn that the last state of India was worse than the first—(cheers)—and undoubtedly the House of Commons possessed far more power in the old days of the Company than it had done since the great change which took place in 1858. There had been many men who had taken up the cause of India and under whom he had been delighted to work. They could never forget the immense services which Professor Fawcett rendered in the House of Commons. (Cheers.) He had only lately been talking with Lord Edward Fitzmaurice over the efforts they had made as chairman and treasurer of Professor Fawcett's election committee at Hackney, and they felt that they had at least done something for India in helping to bring Fawcett back to the House at that time. (Hear, hear.) He would never forget the way in which India spontaneously rose on that occasion and the mass of letters and the number of cheques they received from all parts of India accompanied by expressions of gratitude for Fawcett's services and intense anxiety at his absence from Parliament for even a few weeks. Since Fawcett had gone Sir William Wedderburn had done excellent work, but they must all painfully feel that the hold of the House of Commons over India was relaxing not from any defect in the men who handled the question, but because the conditions of the problem threw too much power into the hands of the representatives of the Crown. (Hear, hear.) As for the remedies for this state of things he could see but one. He thought the British voter if fairly appealed to on this question might be trusted. This was certainly shown in Fawcett's case, for he lost his seat in Brighton from causes not in the least connected with his services to India and his return for Hackney was due largely by these services. (Hear, hear.) He asserted that any man who faced a constituency in this country with the apparently paradoxical doctrine that a British member of Parliament should give more consideration to India than to his own constituency, would find that the British voter would go with him. (Hear, hear.) It was true that in Great Britain they had very important and delicate questions to deal with, but they could be examined and attended to on the spot, whereas the affairs of India were more important in a governmental sense—(hear, hear)—and the responsibility of members was greater. (Hear, hear.) In home affairs we had the charm of personal interest and could appeal to this; but in the other case they had to appeal to the voter's sense of justice and they would not appeal in vain. (Hear, hear.) He fully believed the elector never disregarded that appeal, and if members of the House of Commons would feel the responsibility which rested on them of putting this question to their electorate as one to which they must give great attention he believed the electorate would respond to that appeal. That was the only cure and no one in that room could feel more strongly than he did the truth of Sir William Wedderburn's assertion that the main danger was that the control of the House of Commons over India had declined and that it was most regrettable that that decline had taken place. (Cheers.)

Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., thought that one reason why the present House of Commons took such little interest in India was that it was not a reforming Parliament. (Hear, hear.) It was a conservative Parliament and did not care to trouble itself with difficulties, and he thought they would require another general election before they could hope to get any reforms. One great reason for the apathy of this country in regard to Indian affairs was that they did not understand India, their training being so entirely different. The number of people in England who knew India reasonably well was necessarily very small and he was afraid that other measures than the present would have to be adopted to get the question of India fairly brought forward in Parliament, and he considered that it would be a very excellent thing to have a small number of men returned to Parliament direct from India. (Hear, hear.) It was a most reasonable thing, and they found that this kind of system actually obtained in France. They might have at least three members for India, one for each presidency, and their presence would be of very great value. (Hear, hear.) It would of course be still better if the Indian Government contained a large representative element. (Hear, hear.) It was impossible that this country could permanently rule any country that was fairly well educated without introducing that system of representation, and he thought that the results of applying this principle to the Indian Legislative Councils had proved most satisfactory. (Hear, hear.)

Madame Delaforce remarked that the question of whether we had or had not succeeded in India depended upon whether we wished to regard ourselves as reformer or usurper. (Cheers.) Lord Salisbury had shown how he looked on the matter of Indian representation by his references to the "black man" when Mr. Naoroji was returned to Parliament. Lord Macaulay had described how Warren Hastings was told that he was to do all the good he could for the Natives, but "to send home money," and as these objects were antagonistic it was no wonder we had failed from a reforming point of view. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. H. J. Wilson, M.P., felt that no definite remedy for the apathy of the House of Commons had been proposed. The great difficulty was what could they do individually? (Hear, hear.) He believed it was perfectly true that the great heart of the English people was sound on India, and that they desired to do justice. (Hear, hear.) But their ignorance was perfectly stupendous, and how this was to be remedied and influence brought to bear on the House of Commons had been scarcely touched upon at all. The terrible state of affairs was fully recognised, but could those who had more experience tell them what could be done? They had many members of Parliament present and they always voted with Sir Wm. Wedderburn, but after all what did that mean? What he wanted to know was what could be done to make the people think on the question and make the House of Commons agree to reforms? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Robinson Souttar, M.P., said that he had lived for some time in India and had had special opportunities of making the acquaintance of Indian native gentlemen, and one of his chief hopes when he was returned to Parliament was that he would be sometimes able to raise his voice on behalf of India. (Hear, hear.) He had been pained to find that no matter what efforts were made and no matter how earnestly they spoke or how thoroughly the questions were stated and presented to the House it all came to the same thing, for there was no result. It had frequently pained him very much to see men like Sir William Wedderburn attacked from their own side of the House, and he considered that those who had nothing better to do than attack their own followers should have the grace to be silent. (Loud applause.) Indeed he had frequently wondered whether every Secretary for India was tarred with the same brush. At the same time he felt that the men who were spending themselves on behalf of India should not be quite so hopeless as they sometimes were, for he believed with Mr. Wilson that the heart of the country was right with regard to India. He felt of course that the present House of Commons was not right, but he could assure them that the heart of the Scotch people was certainly sound. They would just have to keep on hammering away—(hear, hear)—and keep the country informed a little more by the distribution of such splendid magazines as India, and circulating the excellent articles that appeared in it from time to time—(hear, hear)—and if this were done he did not think their cause would be quite hopeless. (Cheers.)

Mr. A. G. Symonds thought that the trouble was that like the man that fell among thieves India had fallen among members of Parliament. (Laughter.) He advocated going direct to the English elector and making him say that he would not vote for anyone if he did not vote straight on Indian questions. They should go away from that Parliament which had refused to listen to the cry of the Natives and show the electors not the elaborate statements in the admirable journal edited by his friend Mr. Hewart, but pictures of Indian life and poverty, and the English people would take up this question as they took up any other great humanitarian question and force members of Parliament to do justice to India. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Martin Wood contended that the only way of making the people of this country and Parliament take an interest in India was to arrange that some portion of the expenditure incurred by the Government of India should be borne by this country and effectively voted upon in the House of Commons. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Weld, speaking as an old Anglo-Indian official, was afraid that nothing would be got out of the English Parliament for India until the Indian party in the House made the Government afraid of them. His experience as a magistrate did not lead him to believe that very much good would be done by throwing more good appointments open to the Natives. However, he fully believed that the greater success of Russia amongst these Eastern people was that as soon as they conquered a country the Russians proceeded to assimilate the natives. (Hear, hear.) They did not stand above them, but fraternised and chummed with them and trusted them fully, whereas we seemed to be afraid to advance any native of India to a high position. (Hear, hear.)

Sir Wm. Wedderburn, in reply, said he did not profess to deal with the remedy in this paper, but he was very glad that the suggestions for the remedy should have been mentioned. There was no time to deal with the matter at present, but he would just say that the basis of all good administration was a good financial basis, and if we were to get the House of Commons to take an interest in the finances of India, then a very important step would have been taken. (Hear, hear.) That might possibly be done if, instead of the financial statement which the Secretary of State put on the table of the House being left there until the last day of the Session, at the beginning of the Session a select Committee of the House could be appointed, consisting of those who took the greatest interest in India,

and as soon as the accounts came from India, they could be referred to this Committee, who would go into them thoroughly and make a proper report to the House with regard to Indian finances. (Hear, hear.) That would be the first step, and it would cause the House to grasp the financial injustices to India which were very great. He would be pleased to accept the invitation which he had received to follow up this address on another date, in a further address dealing with the remedies. (Hear, hear.)

On the motion of Mr. P. W. Clayden, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Sir W. Wedderburn for his address, and to the various members of Parliament and the Chairman for their attendance.

In response Mr. Schwann hoped the day was not far distant when representatives from New Zealand, Quebec and the Cape, would be sitting side by side in the House with members from Madras and Bombay.

The proceedings then terminated.

Commenting on this meeting, the *Morning Leader* wrote (March 14):

In an address at the Liberal Forwards' Club last night, Sir William Wedderburn explained how and why the House of Commons neglects Indian questions. "The cries of India," as Burke said, "are given to seas and winds to blow about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean." The neglect seems to be growing worse. Certainly it may be doubted, as Sir Charles Dilke pointed out, whether Parliament was not more alive to its duty in the old days of the East India Company. Then, at all events, each renewal of the Charter was preceded by a useful stock-taking, and Parliament had a wholesome jealousy of a powerful monopoly. But now enquiry is refused even upon matters of fact like the condition of the Indian peasant or the work of the elected Commissioners of Calcutta. Criticism is difficult and unpopular, the ex-secretary is rather more official than the Secretary of State, and even the "Budget" debate, as it is inaccurately called, is little short of a scandalous farce. Sir William Wedderburn suggests the main cause of the neglect when he says that "in all other departments there are votes behind the grievance" while "in Indian questions alone there is no fear of the British elector." The remedy is less obvious than the disease. But anything which can induce the House of Commons to take a less superficial interest in Indian problems is to the good. The appointment of a Select Committee every year to enquire into the chief questions connected with the Indian financial statement would be a long step in the right direction. There is much to be said also for the proposal to which Mr. Samuel Smith referred with approval last night, that India should send a few direct representatives to the House of Commons. But after all the real work must be done by appealing to the conscience of the British people. Such appeals are never in the long run in vain, and until every sort of effort has been exhausted, there is no excuse for despair.

THE BOUNTY-FED SUGAR BILL.

IMPOSITION OF A COUNTERVAILING DUTY.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT BLOCKED.

EDUCATED INDIAN OPINION ON THE BILL.

[By Cable, from our own Correspondents.]

Bombay, March 16.

Native opinion on the Sugar Duty Bill is meagre and divided.—*By Indo-European Telegraph.*

Madras, March 15.

Educated Native opinion here welcomes the Sugar Bounty Bill as recognising its contention against unqualified "Free Trade" principles as applied to India, and its demand for protection of Indian industries against powerful foreign competition.—*By Indo-European Telegraph.*

Mr. J. M. Maclean, M.P., had intended to move the adjournment of the House of Commons in order to call attention to the new Bill, but a motion of this kind has been "blocked" by a motion in the ordinary course which Sir Howard Vincent has placed upon the paper.

Yesterday's (Thursday's) newspapers published the following statement:—

"Sir Howard Vincent has intimated to Mr. Maclean that he is unable to withdraw his Resolution, which stands in the way of the proposed motion for the adjournment of the House, in regard to the countervailing duties on sugar proposed by the Indian Government. Mr. Maclean has consequently given notice to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the deep interest taken by the members on both sides of the House in the Bill which has been introduced, with the express authority of the Secretary of State for India, in the Calcutta Legislative Council, and also, considering the novelty and importance of the policy embodied in the Bill, he will give a day for its discussion before it receives the assent of the Crown. It is not improbable that this demand for an opportunity for debating the matter will be backed up from the Front Opposition Bench."

The following is the text of the motion of which Sir Howard Vincent has given notice:—

Sugar Bounties.—That this House congratulates the Government of his Excellency Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Viceroy of India, upon the determination shown to safeguard National and Native industrial interests by the decision to levy countervailing duties upon foreign bounty-fed sugar imported into the Indian Empire, and expresses the hope that her Majesty's Government will in the near future decide upon similar grounds to initiate like legislation in this House, having regard to the injury caused to the sugar industries and their allied trades in Great Britain by the operation of the bounties, and the pecuniary burdens imposed upon the taxpayers of the United Kingdom by the consequent depressed, distressed, and discontented condition of the West Indian colonies.

SOME OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"An Absurd Folly."

So the sapient advisers of the Indian Viceroy have decided to establish a "countervailing" duty in obedience to the demands of the forlorn sugar refiners in England and sugar growers in the West Indies. It is an absurd folly, but that is perhaps all the more reason why we should expect the bureaucracy of Simla to take the step. What India is to gain by it, or what our West Indian sugar-growers might gain, no mortal can say. "That, however, has nothing to do with the subject," the official men will probably answer, "All Lord Curzon's Government aims at, is to establish a right principle in international commerce." By all means; we wish it every success. India cannot be much harmed by the measure, nor can we be provoked to greater amusement by this step than by many another of a retrograde kind Simla has often taken before. What would our fate be, though, should Indian ideas in this field come to dominate at home? Well, perhaps we are going back to protectionism anyway, so that also matters little. "Imperial unity" under a tariff of universal exclusiveness — glorious, is it not?—*The Investors' Review* (March 10).

"A Dear Sugar Bill."

This is a Dear Sugar Bill, and if it did not tend to make sugar dear it would not have been brought in. But how will this legislation affect the West Indies? If the duties are successful in keeping foreign sugar, made from beetroot, out of Hindustan, the proportionate increase of the commodity in the market will still further cheapen it elsewhere, and the last state of Barbados will be worse than the first. Then we shall have a demand for countervailing duties to protect the West Indies, or rather an emphasis of the demand already made, and those countervailing duties will apply to the United Kingdom. That is what Sir Howard Vincent and politicians of his type want. The working classes of England, however, will be very unlike themselves if they allow such an iniquitous tax to be imposed upon a necessary of life, not because the money is wanted, but because a decaying industry must be bolstered up. This Indian Bill is the first step on the downward path, and though we do not believe that the Government will be permitted to take the next, they ought to be stopped before they get a controversial advantage to be used hereafter. Another official argument for the Bill is that as the people of India consume coarse sugar, it will not affect them. This is the form of reasoning known as self-destructive. If the beetroot sugar of Central Europe does not compete with the sugar used by the masses in India, all ground for such a measure is gone. For in that case countervailing duties are merely class legislation, designed in the interest of wealthy manufacturers and comfortable consumers. This is, indeed, what they will probably turn out to be. At all events, to withhold the question from the cognisance of Parliament is monstrous and indefensible. It is a most proper occasion for moving the adjournment of the House, and we hope that Mr. Maclean will adopt that course. Why do the Government halt between two opinions? If Protection be a good thing, let us have it all round. If not, let us stick to Free Trade.—*Daily News* (March 11).

"The Old Ignorant Fallacy."

It is the old ignorant fallacy. Will these Tories and their friends in the Press never learn? How does it injure India if Germany and Austria tax Germans and Austrians to send good cheap sugar to the Indian rayat? Why should anyone—least of all a paternal Government so tenderly solicitous for the interests of the natives of India—want to interfere with so satisfactory an arrangement? We have shown that India produces coarse sugar in plenty, that her refining industry is insignificant, but that her people are beginning to want more sugar of the best quality. At present they are getting it cheap. The Government are not satisfied. So they propose to raise the price. For, be it noted, there is no question of raising additional revenue—India has been unexpectedly prosperous during the last year, exchange has been high, the revenue for 1898-99 will far exceed the Budget estimate. No, it is not for more revenue that the thin end of Protection has been inserted in Indian trade policy, but to "protect Native industries." At what cost? It "will not fall upon the consumer," say the Protectionist wiseacres. But it is just upon the consumer, *if the countervailing duties are to be effective*, that the cost will fall. If these duties mean anything they mean the raising of the price of imported sugar of good quality until it has reached a level at which the Indian manufacturer with his primitive plant, his old-world methods, and his strong conservatism, be he Native or Anglo-Indian, can put a passable imitation of that sugar upon the market. If with the sugar-cane at his very door, with the cheapest and most tractable labour in the world, he still wants Protection, he must be a very incompetent manufacturer indeed. And it is in the last resort to aid this sort of person that the Government of India, with the full approval of Lord George Hamilton, proposes to raise the price of good sugar to the whole body of Indian consumers.—*Daily Chronicle* (March 14).

"Open to Very Strong Objection."

The proposal to place a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar imported into India is open to very strong objection. Sugar is the chief, almost in fact the only, luxury of the poorest classes in India, and nothing but the most cogent urgency could justify any taxation which would raise the price of their one poor luxury to the imperfectly nourished, landless, labouring population. True it is that the imports of bounty-fed sugar are of the refined article, and that the consumption of the Indian poorer classes is of the much cheaper unrefined sugar. But indirectly the importation of refined sugar, so far as it diminishes the demand for raw sugar to be refined, tends to lower the price of unrefined sugar, and cheap sugar is in itself an enormous boon to the poor. No doubt the Indian Government will be able to show that the sugar-refining industry is suffering from the competition of imported sugar, but the interests of the sugar refiners hardly deserve to be mentioned in comparison with those of the great population of consumers. A more important question will be the effect of lower sugar prices on the growth of sugar-cane. The cultivation of cane has always been one of the most profitable forms of Indian farming, mainly limited by the agriculturist's power of providing the abundant manure, copious irrigation, and high tillage necessary. It may be that the import of bounty-fed sugar is affecting the area of sugar cultivation, but an assertion to that effect will require to be supported by very convincing proof. And in any case it may well be doubted whether the interests of growers and refiners together can justify the Indian Government in taking measures adverse to the interests of the poorest classes of the population, the more especially as it is on these that the salt tax, as an impost levied on an absolute necessary of life, falls with disproportionate weight.—*Manchester Guardian* (March 13).

"Why Should the People be Taxed?"

It is, in fact, entirely beyond dispute that the large import of German and Austrian sugar into India is determined not by the question of price but by the question of quality. The figures of the Indian Customs prove it. If we compare quantities and values of the so-called bounty-fed sugar and of the other sugar, mostly Mauritian, imported into India in the year 1897-98, we obtain the startling result that the bounty-fed sugar was the dearer by nearly 13d. a cwt. Yet Mauritian sugar, especially of late years, has been of very fair quality, and certainly far better than the sugar produced in Indian refineries. If, then, Indian consumers are willing to buy German and Austrian sugar in such large quantities and to pay for it a considerably higher price than they pay for any other sugar, the conclusion is irresistible that they buy it because, for the purposes for which this sugar is intended, quality is more important than price. It is mainly for the manufacture of sweetmeats that German sugar is required in India, just the same as pure sugar is required in England for the manufacture of high-class confectionery. The sweetmeat industry is one of the most extensive of all the indigenous manufactures of India. Why should the people be taxed upon an article of daily consumption, not in order to raise revenue for the purposes of government, but in order to put money into the pockets of a handful of private persons who own shares in sugar refineries? That is the question which the House of Commons is entitled to press upon Lord George Hamilton as the Minister who is ultimately responsible for every Act of an Indian Legislature.—*Daily Graphic* (March 13).

Lord G. Hamilton's Cant.

Whatever view may be taken of the Bill which Sir James Westland introduced in the Legislative Council at Calcutta yesterday, there can be only one opinion among straightforward men of all parties as to the cant talked by Lord George Hamilton in the House of Commons. The Bill imposes a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar imported into India. It does not aim, as Sir James Westland's tariff of 1894 and 1895 aimed, at increasing revenue. On the contrary its purpose is avowedly protective. It is to help the producer in India. Free traders like ourselves could not approve such a measure save upon one condition—the condition, namely, that it was really and on substantial grounds desired by Indian public opinion (a very different thing from Anglo-Indian opinion). Such conditional approval would follow from the belief, which we strongly hold, that the authentic opinion of the Indian public is entitled to the same fiscal freedom as that which our Colonists claim and exercise. We do not yet know enough about the origin and the nature of this particular measure to say whether the condition to which we refer is or is not fulfilled. But in either event Lord George Hamilton's cant about "the independence of the local Legislature" is merely intolerable. "Independence," indeed, when the Bill is a Government Bill, introduced in a Council in which the Government possess a stereotyped majority, and admittedly approved in advance, if not actually concocted, by the India Office! We saw the "independence of the local Legislature" at work when the official majority of the Indian Legislative Council last year enacted the new law of sedition drafted by the Secretary of State. Let us not deceive ourselves. If a Government Bill introduced in the Legislative Council at Calcutta does in a particular case happen to represent the will of the local community, that is an accident and not an ingredient of the situation. Mr. Maclean aptly followed up Lord G. Hamilton's humbugging formula yesterday with the question whether the noble lord remembered his interference in the case of the cotton duties. Lord George Hamilton sat silent—and, we should like to think, ashamed. Certainly there has been no more disgusting incident in modern British politics than the disreputable bid which Lord G. Hamilton, as ex-Secretary for India, made in 1895, for the votes of Lancashire when he vehemently opposed an import duty on cotton goods designed solely for purposes of revenue.—*Morning Leader* (March 11).

The Parliamentary representative of the *Daily Chronicle* thus described the scene in the House of Commons on March 10:—

Lord George never misses an opportunity to talk; and the advantage of that is that when he is silent, you always know that he has nothing to say. Now yesterday he was effectively silenced, and the pity of it was that he had not meant this to happen at all Lord George had, in his own little way, prepared a *coup* for the House of Commons. I suppose that he was jealous of Mr. Goschen; though Mr. Goschen's mystery did not seem likely to provoke emulation. But Lord George was at the beginning more fortunate; and the explosion burst on an entirely unsuspecting House. His fellow-conspirator in the plot was Sir Howard Vincent, who had placed on the paper a very innocent question of a type with which the House is quite familiar as coming from that quarter. He asked Lord George whether the Government of India had, with his approval, determined to levy a countervailing duty on the importation of foreign bounty-fed sugar. The House heard with a weary indifference. Of course, th Secretary for India would deny it, and then there would be an interval of repose before Sir Howard broke out again. But in a moment all was changed. "Yes," snapped out Lord George in his high staccato, "a Bill has been introduced to-day into the Legislative Council at Calcutta, with my approval, for levying countervailing duty on the importation of all foreign bounty-fed sugar into India." There was a burst of Tory cheering—loud, defiant, which seemed to say, "Now at last we are playing the game."

From the Opposition there came an answering shout of "Oh!" and long murmurs of discontent. But the surprise did not end there. The revolting voice did not come from the Opposition or the Cobden Club. It came from below the gangway on the Tory side—from Mr. Maclean, once a famous Indian journalist, and one who knows more of India than the whole family of the Hamiltons put together. Mr. Maclean is a man of wrath, and when he intervenes on Indian subjects he has a thundery sound in his voice, and an aggressive lowering of the brows. Many officials have made him so. "May I ask," he asked slowly and menacingly, "whether the noble lord will submit this change of policy for the approval of the House of Commons?" There was a roar of cheering from the Opposition, now really angry. Lord George rose confidently to the challenge, with one of those little platitudes which he loves so dearly. "I have more than once told my hon. friend that I have no intention whatever of interfering with the independence of the local Legislature." This sounded a good constitutional sentiment, and the Tories cheered again. But Mr. Maclean is not so easily beaten. He has a longer memory than Lord George. So now came the question which brought that unhappy silence, so sad to a humane spectator. "Does the noble lord not remember his having interfered with that independence in the case of the cotton duties?" It was a homing shot. There was no doubt of its directness. A great shout went up from the Radicals, and silence fell on Lord George. Those who like stories to end well must not read this, for though Lord George is by no means a hero of mine, a harder heart could not have restrained a tear.

The following letter to the editor, from Mr. Harold Cox, appeared in the *Daily News* of March 13:—

In your admirable article of March 11, on the question of the Indian Sugar Duties, you say:—"India, it is said, does not expors sugar. She only consumes it." This is not the case. India hat been a very large exporter of sugar, and will probably continue to be so. There was, it is true, a heavy falling off in 1897-98, the famine year, but even in that year, the exports of Indian Sugar were no less than 586,000 cwts. It is therefore fairly evident that neither German nor Austrian bounties have killed the Indian sugar industry.

The probable explanation of this new move on the part of Lord George Hamilton and the Indian Government is a desire to protect the few firms that have established refineries in India. The whole capital of the Indian refining industry is probably under a million sterling, and, as many of the firms are of recent origin, it may be assumed that there are profits in the industry in spite of bounties. But in order to increase the profits of these few firms, the present Government is willing to sacrifice the interests of the enormous number of natives of India who use refined sugar in the manufacture of sweetmeats and for personal consumption. Probably an impartial enquiry would show that the growing imports of German sugar into India are due rather to its superior quality than to its cheapness.

MR. ROMESH DUTT'S "MAHA-BHARATA."

LETTERS FROM THE QUEEN AND LORD GEORGE HAMILTON.

The following letters which Mr. Romesh Dutt has received with reference to his "Maha-Bharata," copies of which he sent for acceptance of her Majesty the Queen and of the Secretary of State for India, will be read with interest:—

Windsor Castle, March 8, 1899.

Dear Sir,—I have laid before the Queen the copy of your "Epic of Ancient India," which you have been good enough to offer for her Majesty's acceptance.

I am desired to express to you the thanks of her Majesty for this interesting work.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours very faithfully,
(Signed) Arthur Bigge.

Romesh C. Dutt, Esq., C.I.E.

India Office, S.W.

My dear Mr. Dutt,—I have to thank you for the handsomely-bound volume of your work, "Epic of Ancient India," which you so kindly sent me. I will read it with interest and

pleasure. Your labour and trouble in translating such a classical poem will be repaid, for it will bring home to many, who before were wholly ignorant of the fact, what Indian civilisation and literature were, when we were comparative savages, and it will show the high ideal and aspirations to which so many of India's best subjects attempt to rise.

Believe me, yours truly,

(Signed) George Hamilton.

Romesh Dutt, Esq.

Imperial Parliament.

Thursday, March 9.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

HEALTH OF BRITISH TROOPS IN INDIA.

Major Rasch asked the Secretary of State for India, whether, in view of the facts stated in the Army Medical Report of 1897, that the number of admissions to hospital for venereal disease per 1,000 was 507, only three per cent. less than in 1896, and that the number invalided to England in 1897 was 662, an increase of 183 over the previous year, the Government would consider the advisability of permitting the Indian Government to take such measures as they might think fit for the detection of diseased persons of both sexes, and to detain such persons in hospital until cured:

And, whether the Government had received any reports as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the new cantonment rules enforced in 1899.

Lord G. Hamilton: The statement quoted by my hon. and gallant friend relates to troops in cantonments only.

Including those on field service, the admission rate for venereal disease was 485 per 1,000 in 1897, against 511 in 1896; a reduction of 26 per 1,000.

The new cantonment rules were not brought into operation until towards the end of 1897, and could not be expected to have much effect in lowering the ratio for the whole year. No report has yet been received as to their effectiveness or otherwise; and until the results of their working have been ascertained I do not propose to take any further action. The returns for 1898, so far as they are known, are very encouraging, and show a considerable further decrease.

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM.

Mr. Schwann asked the Secretary of State for India, if he could lay upon the Table of the House the Triennial Report on Labour Immigration into Assam, which should have appeared at the end of the year 1895, or thereabouts, and which was not produced when last asked for because it was said that the last Viceroy had not been able to consider it owing to the grave events in India, war and famine.

Lord G. Hamilton: On May 9 last I explained, in reply to a question from the hon. member, how the matter stood: the report in question was sent home in March 1897, but the Government of India had not arrived at a conclusion in regard to certain changes of system recommended by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. These recommendations are still under their consideration, but I learn from a despatch of February last that I may expect to receive their conclusions at an early date.

MUSCAT.

Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on what part of the Muscat coast it was proposed to place the French coaling depôt:

Whether the French Government had renounced all territorial and political rights over the site where the depôt was to be placed:

And, whether the Russian Government had also applied for a coaling depôt on the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Brodrick: The site of the proposed French coaling depôt has not yet been actually fixed, but the Sultan will be advised only to grant a depôt at Muscat itself. The French Government have now accepted our view of the treaty of 1862 that it precludes either Government from accepting any cession or lease of Muscat territory, and in lieu of their former concession have agreed to accept a coal depôt on exactly the same terms as our own. We have received no information to the effect stated in the third paragraph of the question.

Sir Charles Dilke asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, if the Muscat incident was at an end, her Majesty's Government would at once lay upon the Table the papers which explained it.

Mr. Brodrick: Though the question is settled in principle the details are still under discussion, and it would not be expedient at this stage to lay any papers on the subject.

Mr. Labouchere asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the concession which the Sultan of Muscat had granted to France in regard to a coaling depôt included the right to fly the French flag on the depôt and to fortify it:

And, what was the nature of the concession now granted.

Mr. Brodrick: A piece of land was granted in one of the coves dependent on Muscat as a mark of favour and respect to the French Government. There was no stipulation in the grant to preclude the hoisting of the French flag or the erection of fortifications. It is now proposed that the French Government shall have the use of a coalshed in exactly the same manner as the British Government have, and probably in the same place; but there will be no lease or cession of any kind.

Friday, March 10.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BOUNTY-FED SUGAR IN INDIA.
BILL TO IMPOSE A COUNTERVAILING DUTY.
A STORMY SCENE.

Sir Howard Vincent asked the Secretary of State for India, if the Government of India had with his approval determined to levy a countervailing duty on the importation of foreign bounty-fed sugar.

Lord G. Hamilton: A Bill, under which countervailing duties will be imposed upon all bounty-fed sugar imported into India, has, I believe, been introduced to-day, with my approval, into the Legislative Council at Calcutta.

Mr. Maclean: May I ask the noble lord whether this Bill has been introduced with his assent.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have already said so.

Mr. Maclean: Does the noble lord intend to submit that change of policy to the House of Commons before it is carried out. (Opposition cheers).

Lord G. Hamilton: I have more than once told the hon. member that I have no intention whatever of interfering with the independence of the local authority. (Cheers).

Mr. Maclean: Does the noble lord remember how he interfered with the independence of the local authority in the case of the cotton duties? (Loud Opposition cheers).

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

No answer was returned.

Monday, March 13.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION IN MADRAS.

Mr. Samuel Smith, asked the Secretary of State for India, whether the Government had yet received the answer to the further despatch, stated to have been sent to the Government of Madras last year, on the subject of land revenue defaulters and the general administration of land revenue in that Presidency; and, if so, whether he was now prepared to lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence on the subject as promised in his answer last Session.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am unable to trace, in the reports of the answers given by me last Session, any promise of the kind referred to in the honourable member's question; but I find that I offered to furnish the honourable member with copies of the Madras land revenue reports for 1894-5 and 1895-6, adding that I did not propose to lay them on the table. I am now in a position to supply him with the Report for 1896-7 if he wishes it; but I do not see any sufficient reason for presenting papers on the subject.

THE BOUNTY-FED SUGAR BILL.

Mr. Herbert Roberts asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he would lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Bill, introduced on Friday, the 10th instant, in the Legislative Council of India, imposing a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar.

Lord G. Hamilton: On Tuesday last, my right hon. friend the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated, on my behalf, in reply to a question, that the responsibility for Indian legislation is thrown by the law firstly upon the Legislative Council, and secondly upon the Secretary of State for India, on whose advice any Bill may, if he thinks fit, be disallowed, and that to lay a copy of an Indian Bill during its passage through the Council upon the Table of this House would involve a transference of responsibility to which I was not prepared to agree. It is hardly necessary for me to add that I am responsible to this House for the advice which I may give on each case; and I shall be perfectly ready, if this Bill is passed, to lay a copy of it on the Table, and, if necessary, to justify the course which I have taken.

Tuesday, March 14.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF LASCARS.

Mr. Havelock Wilson asked the President of the Board of Trade, if he could state the number of Lascars employed as sailors, firemen, coal trimmers, boys, and assistant cooks on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamship "Rome," on her last voyage:

Whether he would give such statement from the list supplied to the officers of Customs under section 125, sub-section 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act:

And, whether he could state how many cubic feet of space were provided for each Lascar seaman employed on this vessel on her last voyage.

Mr. Ritchie: I am informed that the number of Lascars employed on the Peninsular and Oriental steamship "Rome" on her latest voyage, in the capacities of sailors, firemen, coal trimmers, boys, and assistant cooks, as taken from the list supplied to officers of Customs, was 112. The space in cubic feet provided for each Lascar was 80·3, which, as the hon. member is aware, is in excess of the requirements of both the Indian and the Imperial Acts.

THE POST OFFICE AT MUSCAT.

Sir Seymour King asked the Secretary of State for India, whether the post office at Muscat was a branch of the Indian Post Office.

And, why the boon of penny postage had not been granted to British residents there.

Lord G. Hamilton: It is true that the Post Office at Muscat is worked as a branch of the Indian Post Office; but the Imperial penny postage scheme is intended for correspondence between the various portions of the British Empire, among which Muscat cannot be included.

THE BOUNTY-FED SUGAR BILL.
UNCERTAIN NUMBER OF REFINERIES CLOSED.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for India, if he could state to the House what number of sugar refineries had been closed in India on account of the competition of imported sugar from countries granting bounties on sugar production:

What was the annual production of sugar from these refineries:

What amount of capital was invested in them, and whether it was held by Europeans or Natives:

And, what amount of revenue the Bill for the imposition of countervailing duties was estimated to yield.

Lord G. Hamilton: Complaints have been received by the Government from various quarters of the inability of the Native sugar refiners to compete with the bounty-fed sugars, and many small refineries have in consequence been closed, but I have not their exact numbers, nor have I any statement of the amount of capital invested in them.

It is difficult to estimate what the yield of any countervailing duty will be, but I do not think that under any circumstances the yield of this duty will be over £50,000 a year.

Thursday, March 16.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

EXCLUSION OF NATIVE FIRMS FROM GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the Secretary of State for India whether his attention had been drawn to a resolution of the Government of India in the Finance and Commerce Department, No. 2587, of June 9 last, under which certain firms had been selected as qualified to tender for Government contracts in articles of steel and iron:

Whether he would state what public benefit was obtained by limiting the competition to these firms, and upon what evidence of special qualification the selection had been made:

Whether he was aware that among these selected firms not a single Native firm was included:

And, would he explain how this exclusion of Native enterprise was held to be in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Government of India, published in 1883, which directed that, unless prices or quality compelled another course, the preference should invariably be given to Indian over European manufactures.

Lord G. Hamilton: 1. The resolution of the Government of India of June 9, 1898, regarding the receipt of tenders in India for Government contracts for articles of steel and iron, was approved by me before its issue.

2. It is a common practice for Government departments to invite tenders only from firms as to whose competence and resources they have some reason to be satisfied; and the advantages of this course must, I think, be obvious. But in this case it is only for the present that the competition is limited to the firms specified, as it is expressly mentioned that the list is subject to revision from time to time. The local Govenments were consulted as to the firms who were qualified to be placed on the list.

3. I am unable to say whether any of the selected firms are composed wholly or partially of Natives of India but no racial disqualification of any kind has been imposed, and if there are Native firms willing and competent to tender, there is nothing whatever to prevent them from being added to the list. The object of the Government is to purchase from producers direct, not to encourage middlemen.

4. The policy of the Orders of 1883, in favour of the purchase of stores of local manufacture when practicable, remains in full force, and has reference, not to any question of race distinctions, but to the capacity and location of the manufactories at which the required articles are produced.

THE STATE RAILWAYS IN INDIA.
THE RUMOURED PROPOSALS TO PURCHASE.

Mr. Philip Stanhope asked the Secretary of State for India whether offers had been entertained by the authorites from certain capitalists for purchase of State Railways in India, in particular the Eastern Bengal Railway:

Could some statement be made by presentation to Parliament of correspondence or other documents that might serve to explain the principle on which such proposals proceeded, or the object with which such transfer of State property and assets was considered expedient; also a statement of the terms offered by capitalists who proposed such purchase:

In framing such terms, would care be taken to include consideration for interest payments that had been drawn from current revenues of India from time to time, and which stood as debits to the various Indian Railways:

And, before any purchase or sale of Indian Railway property had been agreed upon would a report be called for from the auditor of the accounts of the Secretary of State in Council, stating his approval or disapproval of the disposal of such property, such report to be laid before Parliament previous to any definitive sanction being given to such transaction.

Lord G. Hamilton: I am not aware that any offer for the purchase of any State line in India has been entertained.

Should any such offer be received, the terms of purchase to be entertained would only be arrived at after consideration of all the interests concerned and would be fixed after consultation with the financial advisers of the Secretary of State; but among these the auditor is not included.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE NATIVE ARMY.

Mr. Philip Stanhope asked the Secretary of State for India, how far and in what direction during the last dozen years had the Indian Military authorities, in the methods of recruiting and organising their Native armies, extended the policy of forming regiments or companies of special races, castes, or communities:

And, could any correspondence be presented, or other form of consecutive statement be made that would serve to explain to Parliament the objects of these sectional organisations and show what authorities had advised these changes in recruiting and in classifying the rank and file of the Indian armies; such statement to include copies of any dissents recorded or objections made either in the Council of the Governer General or in that of the Secretary of State.

Lord G. Hamilton: The whole of the Native army in India is now organised either in class regiments, or in class squadron, and class company regiments, the general principles as regards the latter being that no class should consist of less than two troops or two companies, and that as a rule there should not be more than three classes in a regiment, and never more than four classes. The composition of each regiment is detailed in the Indian Army List. The change was recommended by the Government of India, with the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief, and of the Governments of Madras and Bombay. One member of the Viceroy's Council dissented from the proposal to form class company regiments in Bombay, but did not record any written dissent. There were no dissents recorded in the Council of India.

I do not think the subject is one upon which it would be advisable to publish the correspondence, though I could have a memorandum prepared which, without entering into the reasons for the changes, would show the changes which have been made of late years.

THE SUGAR DUTY BILL.
NO DAY FOR DISCUSSION.

Mr. Maclean asked the First Lord of the Treasury, whether, in view of the deep interest taken by members on both sides of the House in the Bill to impose a countervailing duty on sugar, which had been introduced with the express authority of the Secretary of State for India into the Calcutta Legislative Council, and also considering the novelty and importance of the commercial policy embodied in the Bill, he would give a day for its discussion before it received the Royal Assent.

Mr. A. J. Balfour: In the present state of public business, it is quite impossible for me to afford the facilities for which the hon. gentleman asks. (Ironical Opposition cheers.)

Mr. Maclean: I will raise the question on a motion for adjournment, or whenever opportunity arises.

Mr. MacNeill: Will the First Lord get his friend the member for Sheffield to take off the blocking notice? (Opposition cheers.)

No answer was given.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON INDIAN QUESTIONS.

THE WORK OF THE BRITISH COMMITTEE.

Elsewhere in the present issue of India will be found a special report of the meeting held at the Liberal Forwards' Club, London, on Tuesday last, March 14, when Sir William Wedderburn, M.P., delivered an address on "India in the House of Commons."

Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji will, on one of the Sundays in May, deliver an address on India at the Westbourne Park Sunday Afternoon Conference.

As has already been announced, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal will, on March 20, address a meeting of the Carlisle Women's Liberal Association on India.

On February 27 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee addressed a large audience at Bolton on "The Industrial Condition of the Indian People." The lecture, which was illustrated by lime-light views, was much appreciated, the vote of thanks being seconded by an Indian gentleman, who said he considered the lecture a faithful and pleasing account of Indian life and Indian needs.

On March 1 a lantern lecture on "India" was given by a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee at Littleborough, in the Liberal Club. Mr. Ernest Harvey presided. A hearty invitation to the lecturer to give a further address on another occasion was offered by all who took part in the discussion.

In the Elland bye-election Miss Alison Garland spoke at four meetings and dealt with Indian affairs in speaking on Imperial politics.

On March 9 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee lectured at Nottingham, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Women's Liberal Association, on "The Industrial Condition of the Indian People." Mr. F. J. Perry presided over a good attendance.

On March 11 a lecturer on behalf of the British Committee addressed the members of the Liberal Club, Nottingham, on the land question of India. Mr. W. Allen introduced the lecturer, who was cordially received. Sir John Turney proposed and Mr. Radford seconded a vote of thanks to the lecturer.

Meetings have also been held during the present week at Kettering and Burton-Latimer.

Dr. Chowry Muthu writes that he addressed a large meeting on Sunday last at the Congregational Church, Highgate, on "England and India."

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